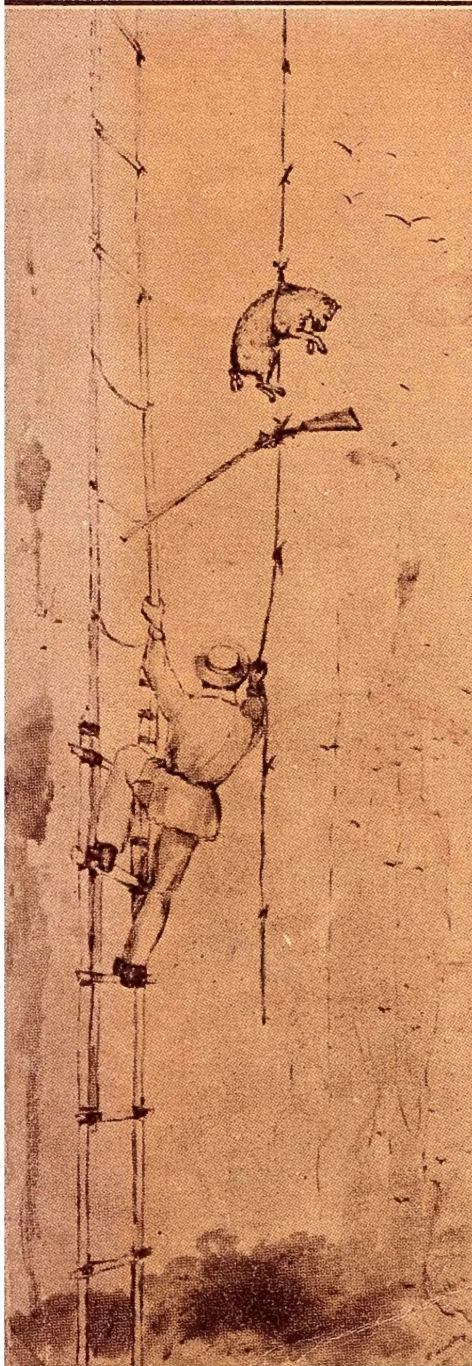




Fontana Silver Fern



*Great  
Days  
in  
New  
Zealand  
Exploration*

*John Pascoe*



GREAT DAYS IN  
NEW ZEALAND EXPLORATION

*THE BUSH AND THE RAIN*

*Edited by John Pascoe*

THE GREAT JOURNEY, by Thomas Brunner

MR. EXPLORER DOUGLAS, by Charles Edward Douglas

*By John Pascoe*

UNCLIMBED NEW ZEALAND

THE MOUNTAINS, THE BUSH AND THE SEA

THE SOUTHERN ALPS (Part I) Guide-book

LAND UPLIFTED HIGH

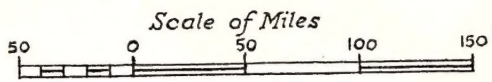
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(The Rock and The Snow)



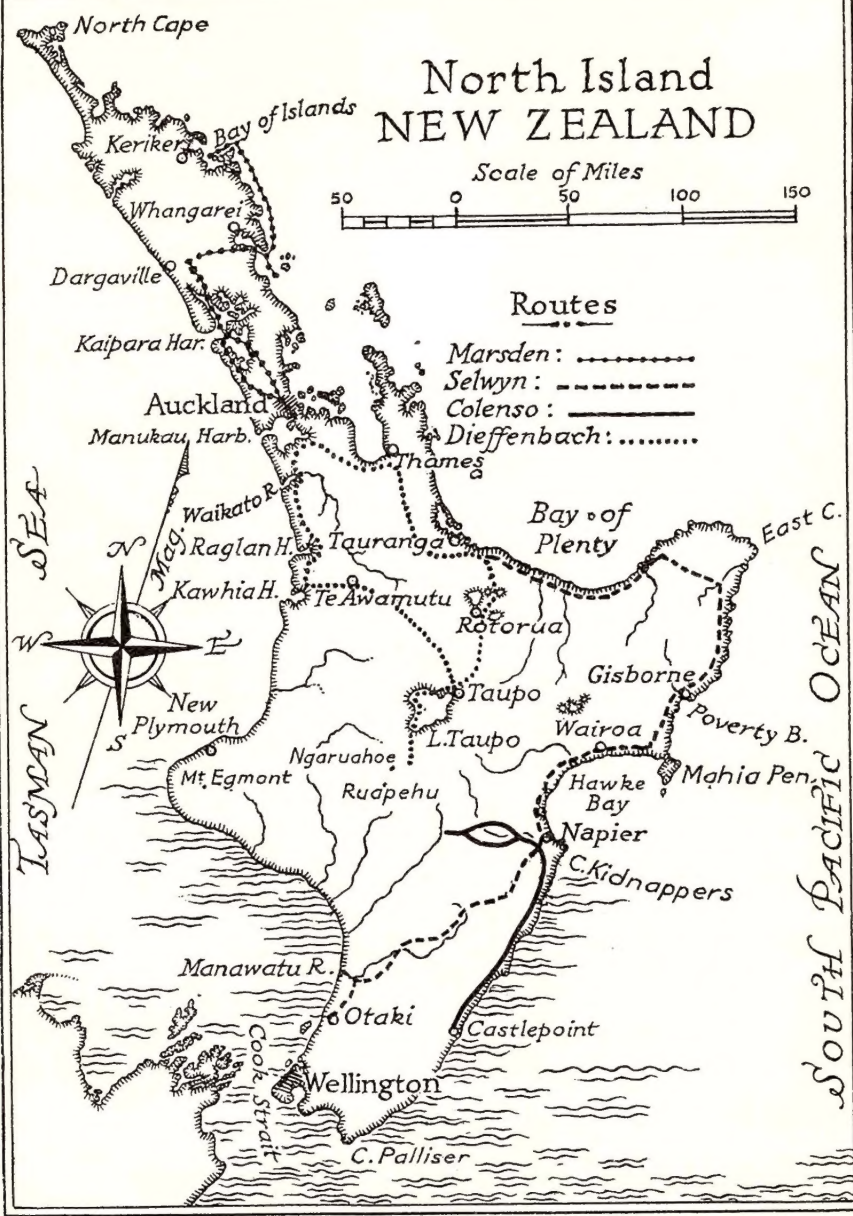


# North Island NEW ZEALAND



## Routes

- Marsden: ..... (dotted line)
- Selwyn: - - - - - (dashed line)
- Colenso: ——— (solid line)
- Dieffenbach: ..... (dash-dot line)



GREAT DAYS IN NEW ZEALAND  
**EXPLORATION**

*THE BUSH AND THE RAIN*

*by*  
JOHN PASCOE

Foreword by George Lowe, O.B.E.

*Collins*

FONTANA SILVER FERN  
AUCKLAND AND LONDON

*First published in 1959*  
A. H. & A. W. REED

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*To the Memory of my Father*  
*Guy Dobrée Pascoe*

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Relevant maps by W. G. Harding show explorers' routes

## DUST COVER

Flooded tributaries of the Arawhata River

*John Pascoe*

John Pascoe on a South Westland peak in 1958

*Bill Hannah*

## *Foreword*

TEN YEARS AGO I was crossing Cook Strait, after my first small journey into the mountains, when I met John Pascoe. Even then, his exploits had become legend and he puffed at his curly pipe and encouraged me to talk: and talk I did while he listened—I was full of my own experiences.

I should have listened: for here was a mountaineer whose sport had grown into a way of life. From the climbing of remote summits in New Zealand's unsophisticated valleys, his interests had broadened into knowing more of the glaciers and rivers that ran down the wild valleys to the sea; and then to know the history of their exploration.

In this volume of historical tales he presents an absorbing collection, from his own researches; eighteen journeys typical of New Zealand exploration in the last century. But here, he has accomplished more than that: he is a writer who has brought off "a double". He has written of the great journeys of our own Livingstones and communicated something of the feelings of joy he felt when exploring. John Pascoe is a good story-teller and he recounts these in his own sincere and dedicated way.

GEORGE LOWE



## Preface

MANY OF THE original accounts of the explorers are inaccessible to the layman. In any case such accounts often need to be explained and interpreted in light of subsequent experiences. Many of the explorers of New Zealand require biographical profiles as background for their work. Many journeys need some first-hand topographical knowledge to make them intelligible.

I have attempted in this book to give clear narratives based on the original accounts of exploration, and to make comments and explanations where necessary. I have tried to relate the whole to a wider field of pioneer activity, and to search the heart of a man as well as his manuscripts. It has not been my aim to compete with the wholly admirable book *The Exploration of New Zealand* by W. G. McClymont, with his skilful compression of all main journeys in both islands on a regional basis. I have selected eighteen journeys and included a personal postscript to make nineteen chapters. Each journey is typical of New Zealand, and the total of the explorations includes considerable variety. There is some emphasis on mountain exploration because of my own interests and experiences, but in the main I chose to record those explorers whose narratives could best be located.

*Great Days in New Zealand Mountaineering* was a series title to which my publishers were committed with similar books on other aspects of New Zealand life, but I added to the title a more personal sub-title *The Rock and the Snow*. For the same reason I give to this book a sub-title *The Bush and the Rain*. The term "great days" is obviously not intended as a definite period of 24 hours but rather as a broad phrase indicating a period of significant activity; a necessary distinction for journeys that covered weeks and months. If, in the final chapter, I have obtruded my thoughts on my own very minor part in adding to gaps in maps, I have done so in all humility, and, I hope, in some perspective.

If I was born eighty years too late to join the company of real

explorers in New Zealand I was born twenty years too soon to partake in exploring adventures overseas. Today a young New Zealander can prove himself in the Himalayas or the Antarctic and, as likely as not, gain a place in an expedition whose funds are helped by the Everest Foundation, the Government or scientific bodies.

I take my position, such as it is, as a New Zealander whose purpose is to interpret his own country to his readers and to make known widely the trials of earlier generations from the missionaries to the surveyors, and from the scientists, sheepmen, and gold prospectors to the mountaineers. As the accounts are essentially popular I have not added the documentation that a more formal work would demand. I have however added as an appendix a "Reference to Sources" that would encourage a serious student to check my facts or dispute, if he so wished, my opinions. I have seldom given long quotations, but have transcribed the action in my own terms while attempting to infuse some flavour of the original.

The order of the chapters is taken as logically as possible from the beginnings of pakeha history to recent times, and, on that account, does not always move from north to south, though that has been a subsidiary aim.

I have what might be described as routine gratitude to give to David Hall, faithful friend who has always helped my books through their growing pains to a semblance of coherence. I also record thanks to the photographers who have allowed me to use their prints, as credited in the list of illustrations. Ray Richards, editor for the publishers, has given me his generous encouragement. I am very grateful to George Lowe, Himalayan and Antarctic explorer, for writing a Foreword and W. G. Harding for excellent maps. As usual, the task of writing these chapters has been entirely a spare-time venture.

My wife has helped me with sympathetic understanding of my need to fulfil yet another of my writing ambitions. If I have communicated to New Zealanders an appreciation of their own origins in pioneer struggles I will count my objective achieved.

JOHN DOBRÉE PASCOE

289, Muritai Road, Eastbourne,  
Wellington, New Zealand,  
9 February 1959

# 1

## *Samuel Marsden of Northland*

NEW ZEALAND is a young country. Some say it has little or no tradition, but its stories of exploration give some perspective to a view that does cherish tradition. If some years of pakeha settlement are still less than a century and a half, then remember the proud canoes of Polynesian navigators, taking winds, currents, storms, stars and sun's course as signposts for new landfalls.

That Abel Tasman in 1642 thought New Zealand was part of the western coast of a great Southern continent, and that James Cook, re-discoverer in 1769 disproved that theory, is as interesting to contemplate as the knowledge that trade in flax and timber and the search for seals and whales went before organised colonisation. Brown-skinned men came to terms with nature; European men followed them. For New Zealand, with its islands barely dotting the vast Pacific, had a variety of terrain to test the adventurous men who wrestled with its secrets. There were great difficulties and often danger in its rivers, ranges, forested lands and mountain valleys. Though the climate was mild, it had vagaries of behaviour such as snowfall, floods and earthquakes.

Islands as well as continents could nourish good explorers. The motives that sent them forth were various: search for pastures, gold and harbours, converts to Christianity, and the prospect of rare birds and new forms of plant life. When the first Europeans traversed the interior of the North Island they took Maoris as guides. Maori trails gave access from many points of the compass. In this northern part of the country there were no glaciers or uncrossable ranges. There were bad patches and rough going, but where the Maoris could not bypass them, they knew how to struggle over. Shore parties from vessels of the navigators, or gangs of sealers or whalers had no need to venture far from the coast. The honour of major exploration in the North must go to the missionaries. Their zeal as evangelists led



them to accept dangers and obstacles as those to be overcome by faith and piety.

Samuel Marsden was the most notable of the early missionary explorers. His humble origin in Yorkshire, his career from village school to Grammar School and Cambridge, and his choice of a chaplaincy in New South Wales were steps to his place in New Zealand history.

Christmas Day 1814 marked the delivery by Marsden of his first sermon in New Zealand, "behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy." Thus the Bay of Islands saw the pioneer Christian service for its Maori people. Marsden made a relatively short expedition inland during that visit, but it was not until his third voyage that necessity made him an explorer. He was a passenger in H.M.S. *Dromedary* and later in the *Coromandel*, whose objective was to ship spars from the kauri forests. After brief shore trips in the Bay of Islands and Thames districts, and an attempt to reach the Waikato had been foiled by floods, he decided to take a canoe to travel north from Panmure. He described the canoe as "about sixty feet long, designed for war, and very commodious".

Bad weather made the Maoris threaten a month's delay so Marsden resolved to walk north to the Bay of Islands. He was told that the obstacles of coastal travel were too great and that he would have to strike into the interior to pass the head of the main inlets. He would meet swamps, but he did not fear them. River crossings were likely to be more difficult, for he could not swim. The Maoris assured Marsden they could improvise a litter in which he could be carried across the rivers, as though he was a wounded man taken from a battlefield. On 17 August 1820 his long journey began, from the head of the Waitemata Harbour. That evening he slept, wrapped up in his greatcoat "under the guardian care of Him who keepeth Israel".

Marsden's *Journal* makes fascinating reading, with its variety of observations and incidents. The "happy and playful and very active" Maori children, the prevalence of cannibalism, Marsden's methods of teaching Christianity, and a recital of memorable speeches; such subjects all held interest. Some 700 lbs. of potatoes and 300 lbs. of pork were packed in baskets on the way to the Kaipara Harbour, where Marsden was taken to the Wairoa Valley. Thence he was guided along an old Maori track,



where the going was wet, dirty and swampy. At night the party struggled to get a fire from wet wood so that they could dry clothes and recover from the cold. By 27 August they had reached Whangarei, and prepared for a canoe voyage by sea. Two days later they landed at Pataua Inlet, where Marsden climbed a steep and narrow track to a pa. He found the inhabitants roasting snapper, crayfish and fern-root. "It was now quite dark," he wrote. "The roaring of the sea at the foot of the hippah (pa: fortified village), as the waves rolled into the deep caverns beneath, the high precipice upon which we stood, whose top and sides were covered with huts, and the groups of natives conversing round their fires, all tended to excite new and strange ideas for reflection."

After another day on the open sea in a canoe, stormy weather forced Marsden to resume land travel from Tutukaka to Whananaki. He and his guides climbed up and down precipices and rocks, waded inlets and reached their haven in the dark, wet and weary. He was at that time aged 55, and must have found fatigue pressed hard. The generous hospitality of the Maoris in their scattered settlements did much to ease his weariness. Alternating canoe rides and rough walking inland and on the coastline took Marsden to the harbour of Whangaruru, where a short walk on 4 September ended at Pairoa in the Bay of Islands. He boarded a whaler, the *Catherine*, and found that "the food, the conversation, the rest were all sweet". His felicity was increased by the arrival of a Government schooner with letters from his family and friends. He sampled close confinement and sea-sickness on this vessel and determined to await the return of the *Dromedary*.

There is a gap in the *Journal* for a month when presumably Marsden was resting at Keri Keri. By 30 October and in company with two pakehas he was again on the sea, this time in a whale-boat. A calm sea made the early morning passage to Cape Brett a pleasant one. Today the trip is often made by pleasure launches laden with deep-sea fishermen and tourists. By nightfall they camped on the beach at Whananaki. Another day saw them hanging hammocks in bush that fringed Whangarei Harbour. Marsden's intention to leave the whale-boat and cross overland to the Kaipara was frustrated by a state of tribal war. He had no choice but to continue his journey by sea. Head

winds delayed the whale-boat but on 2 November a stiff breeze lashed the sea and the missionaries scurried to Kawau Island, later to be famous as the island home of Sir George Grey. Landfall on the following day near Rangitoto Island was somewhat hazardous on a rocky shore. One of Marsden's companions noted in his journal that he said to him "Sir, you have mistaken the passage; there appears to be no water." They were sailing at nine knots and had no room in which to turn about. They rushed through a big surf into welcome shelter. By 9 November they had reached Panmure. A walk through bush, now the Auckland suburb of Epsom, gave access to the extensive harbour of the Manukau, with its shoals and sandbanks, and shores graced with fine timber.

Those who know Auckland may find it salutary to reflect that in place of row upon row of glorious gardens, long lanes of traffic, undulations surmounted by housetops as far as the eye can see, and a dense pakeha population, there were in that year of 1820 no Europeans save those of the missionary party. Naked Maori children ran about "like rabbits in a warren" on the shores of the Manukau. Marsden had a ten mile walk from the suburb we now know as Onehunga to that of Ponsonby, and his route lay over the top of Mount Albert with a panorama of bush and coastline as far as Cape Colville on the Coromandel Peninsula. The next morning an inflowing tide helped the party up the Waitemata, but their canoe leaked and required baling. A six mile walk led to the Kumeu stream at Muriwai, whence a further trail ended in an isolated Maori settlement. The inhabitants had never seen Europeans before, had no huts but plenty of food, and slept in the brush and fern. Marsden realised that these Maoris had sought a retreat from inter-tribal wars. They would have been north-west of the present township of Helensville, served by rail and road.

On arriving at the west coastline at Rangatira Beach on 13 November they faced a tiring day's march along loose sand. Hot, tired and thirsty the men tramped along the beach past high drift sandhills up to 400 feet high and several miles broad. Marsden found the presence of dead timber under the sand inexplicable. After a relatively short walk early the next morning, they reached a Maori pa at Kopua. The local chief was friendly and provided a canoe to enable Marsden to



#### PIONEER MISSIONARY

Samuel Marsden has landed in the Bay of Islands on Christmas Day 1814. This wood engraving comes from a missionary publication.



#### PIONEER SCIENTIST

Ernst Dieffenbach and William Symonds listening to a Maori chief. It is likely that Symonds is the figure on the left. The illustration is taken from Dieffenbach's book.





#### PEACEMAKING

George Clarke, protector of aborigines, speaks to a Maori gathering on behalf of the Governor. Selwyn and a fellow-missionary are seated on a log. Selwyn made this original sketch in his papers in 1842.

#### A RUGGED BARRIER

The crest of the Raukumara Range falls steeply to scrub and bush. This may not be the exact point crossed by Selwyn's party but it is characteristic of the difficult country between the East Coast and the Bay of Plenty.





visit the outer harbour of the Kaipara and to gain spurs from which he could examine the Kaipara Heads.

The party divided on 17 November. Two of the missionaries returned to Panmure for the whale-boat. Marsden and a companion decided to make another overland trip north. Near the Kaipara Heads a well-disposed Maori pressed Marsden to accept some pigs, but he took only one because the sea was rough at the mouth of the harbour and the freeboard was low. After a safe crossing they canoed up the Wairoa River and camped on the beach. Another short voyage in the canoe with a favourable tide to take them up the river, and they rested at the roadhead, as it were. Marsden's trail lay up the west coast towards Hokianga. By this time he was west of the town we now call Dargaville. Two days walking took them to the considerable obstacle of the Maunganui Bluff, near which one of the Maori guides described brave deeds of a great battle and showed them where the warriors fell. Marsden tasted history in the raw, but unlike the Maoris, he was unafraid of the ghosts of the slain.

The climb over the Maunganui Bluff on 21 November made Marsden tremble, as he looked down sheer faces to the sea. The Maori track was so close to the cliffs that in some parts Marsden crept along on his hands and knees. One surmises that the Maoris, who would have carried heavy loads, were able to walk where Marsden was forced to crawl. It took four hours to cross the high scrub-covered bluff.

Beyond the bluff a diversion caused the Maoris to make a cautious reconnaissance. They saw another Maori party whom they feared to be hostile. One of the guides threw off his cloaks, grasped his club, donned his war mat and crawled through the fern. Marsden said that he was unafraid and could look after himself. The guide returned still uncertain of the intentions of the party he had observed. After a bypass route under the lee of a favourable hill, Marsden's Maoris landed him back on the routine track, which brought them by nightfall to a few miles south of the Hokianga Heads.

At Hokianga Marsden learnt details of the southern raid of Tuwhare and Patuone. He made first-hand observations of the mourning customs of the local Maoris, whose women were lamenting bitterly the death of their men. By 23 November Marsden was ready to journey to Whangaroa. His first stage

was by canoe up the Hokianga, and although friendly Maoris urged him to stay for a day, he was fearful of missing the *Dromedary*. When he camped that night on a beach, the Maoris had left him, and he wrote in his *Journal* that "we were now left in the forests of New Zealand without a guide, as none of us knew the way." On the following morning, the two pakehas found a track in the bush, and after a walk of some hours and several river crossings they met Patuone's wife who rejoiced to see them, as no doubt they did to see her. Later they met Patuone, who gave Marsden the war news and his son as a guide for the rest of the journey. That afternoon Marsden's companion set out for Keri Keri, and Marsden headed for Whangaroa. The next day he tramped through the bush, through deep ravines and over rugged hills, crossing the Kaeo River, and reaching Whangaroa in the afternoon. That evening Marsden boarded the *Dromedary*.

The last paragraph in Marsden's account sums up well. "I had been absent from the ship five weeks and one day, during which period I travelled by land and water, about six hundred miles by estimation, and in some of the worst roads that can be conceived. This must naturally be expected, as the country in this respect is in its aboriginal state—no swamps drained, no bridges over rivers or creeks, no rubbish cleared from the paths. A New Zealander finds no difficulty in crossing the deep marshes, swamps or deep rivers. Through the one he wades, and through the other he swims at his ease."

As well as recording his wanderings between the Bay of Islands and the Waitemata he was paying tribute to whale-boats and canoes, and, above all, to the skills of his Maori guides who were at home in the roughest of country, and capable of meeting its inherent dangers as though they did not exist. There was no doubt that Maori trade and inter-tribal wars had alike inured Maoris to hardships of travel overland, and that their trails were in 1820 the safest paths for Europeans to follow.

Today remnants of great forests barely sketch the outline of their vast earlier expanses. Sealed highways, railways, concrete bridges, ryegrass and clover mark much of Northland for their own. Belts of exotic trees, citrus fruit orchards, and fertile pastures have taken over from the fern. Giant kauris may still

be seen as talismans of their ancestors. Wild coastal headlands and scarped hills still hint at savage beauty that was wilderness to pioneer missionaries. The land and the people have changed.

With Marsden's return to Sydney in December 1820 we take our leave of New Zealand's first explorer. He made other journeys to New Zealand, his last in 1837, a year before his death, but did not repeat his long walks from coast to coast. Perhaps his most permanent memorial is to be found not in monuments nor in the name of a Parliamentary electorate, but in *The Letters and Journals of Samuel Marsden*. His *Third New Zealand Journal* is clear and graphic; a record that founds a tradition of exploration, of human values and of beliefs that gave courage in adversity.

## 2

### *Ernst Dieffenbach of the Thermal Region*

THE MOTIVES for exploration are varied. Some men covered new country to preach their faith, some to seek gold or pasture lands, some to chase adventure, and others, in the minority, such as Ernst Dieffenbach, to seek knowledge of a specialised kind. He was a doctor of medicine and a naturalist. His curiosity was directed to the several fields in which he excelled.

The first ascent of Mount Egmont in 1839 by Dieffenbach and a whaler, James Heberley showed enterprise sufficient to overcome Maori tapu and energy to overcome tangled bush on the lower slopes of the mountain. That two missionaries had preceded Dieffenbach on a long island journey from Kawhia Harbour to Lake Taupo does not prejudice the significance of his work, because his observations were the first to be made by a scientist in the thermal regions and, moreover, were recorded in two volumes as *Travels in New Zealand* (London, 1843) with "contributions to the geography, geology, botany and natural history of that country".

The versatility of Dieffenbach is shown by his completion of a medical degree in Switzerland in 1835 after he had left Germany for political reasons, and his subsequent sanctuary in London, where he took various jobs till he was at last allowed to return to Germany.

The New Zealand Company's *Tory* passenger list included Dieffenbach as surgeon and naturalist. It was not till he had travelled in the Marlborough Sounds, Wellington, Taranaki and Northland that Dieffenbach went south from Auckland to the Waikato. He made the first stage along the beach from the Manukau in balmy moonlight. He was impressed by the missionaries' efforts for the Maoris whom they had converted. One meeting he attended numbered 2,500 Maoris who performed a war dance after a great feast. He met Lady Franklin, wife of the Arctic explorer, at this meeting. From the Waikato



he travelled with a party of 70 Maoris to Aotea Harbour. His narrative is full of references to the geological formation and plant forms he observed; he was as interested in his guides and noted the dyes they used for their clothes, and other details ignored by many travellers. Captain William Symonds, a veteran of the Indies and an agent for a land company, accompanied him.

Thus the two pakehas headed for Kawhia. It is a paradox that today countless air passengers fly uncomprehending over this ragged and tortuous country, with its exciting headlands, determined rivers and contrasting strips of beach. Most men and women read or snooze in a desultory way as their plane drones along its radio beam; they are high enough to clear mountain ranges, yet low enough to give satisfying views to those with the interest to look out of a window. There may be a pall of drifting fog, suddenly revealing a glimpse of breakers from the Tasman Sea meeting a muddy river flow from the interior of the North Island, and, as suddenly, closing again to heighten the sense of mystery. There may be a soft hazy film that obscures detail of bush and coastline or a sharp, clear and crosslit effect that moulds spurs into living relief and at such a distance makes the dotted settlements and farms seem like museum models.

For flying can be an emotional experience for those who wish it. The archaeologist may discern a sudden peep of the site of a Maori pa, long since overgrown by grass or fern, and only to be seen when the height and the light combine to reveal it. Were the Maoris who lived there, who fashioned food storage pits and houses, who built trenches and palisades moa hunters or the successors of moa hunters? The geologist may trace a fault line where earthquakes have lifted part of the country or depressed another. The ornithologist may wonder whether the aircraft has with its throbbing engine told the remnants of huias the story of progress in the skies. The physicist or any other man of knowledge, such as the historian may be bent on recognising at a glance the trails followed by Dieffenbach and Symonds. The poet, writer or playwright, with his creative energy may seek to translate in the terms of his imagination the feeling he has for country and for mankind. The photographer may take a chance of an oblique shot with his camera pressed against a window-pane or an artist store a memory of a blue tint in a green valley floor. The mythical average man may be

neither interested or excited by the passing panoramas but nevertheless conscious that he is seeing a New Zealand that he has never known under conditions that change hourly, daily, weekly, monthly, yearly and so on throughout the passage of time. Will erosion, radioactive dust, bush fires or the destructive elements of nature and mankind reduce this country to wasteland? He will not know.

The judgment made by Dieffenbach that Kawhia Harbour was one of the most important on the west coast of the North Island was based on its clear entrance. He gave his guides each a shirt or gown according to sex to mark his arrival there. Of one chief he noted that "in his exhortations to the rest of our companions he often used the powerful weapons of sarcasm and irony, which had the more weight as they were delivered without arrogance and in perfect good humour". This chief sported a black dress-coat and trousers, with a gossamer hat on his head. From Kawhia the party travelled by canoe and inland along bush tracks. At one place an old rata tree, 54 feet in circumference, gave good shelter in its stem hollowed out by fire, but the tents used by Dieffenbach and Symonds were wet. At night they heard the shrill cries of wekas.

From a clearing on a ridge between the Waipa River and the coast they saw both Kawhia and Aotea Harbours, and, from further along the hills, the broad and open Waipa Valley itself beckoned. Dieffenbach's narrative of this travel is rather sober and restrained. He does not write at length with descriptive passages but packs observations into his accounts. His reactions to a view from Pirongia Mountain, were that "only some small spots of the valley of the Waipa were wooded. On these we observed burnt and bleak stems of old trees, the only sign we could perceive of the intrusion of man upon the dominion of Nature. The undisturbed silence in which the whole was wrapped imparted an agreeable repose to the landscape." He boiled water for a measurement of the height of Pirongia; his calculation made it 2,428 feet, an error of 728 feet too low.

On their descent to the Waipa, the local Maoris greeted the visitors with kumaras, water-melons and dried fish. That evening Dieffenbach was welcomed by a pakeha settler and trader, who had grown his own tobacco of an excellent quality. The following day, 24 April 1841, the party crossed to the

mission station of Otawhao, where they saw "the snowy head of the Ruapehu" (Ruapehu) 150 miles away. This mission station was a year old and had been established by the Church Missionary Society in the present town of Te Awamutu. Dieffenbach was amazed at the progress of the converts, and was impressed by the memory of a blind Maori who catechised them.

The two Europeans left Otawhao on 28 April for Taupo in the company of a chief, his family, and 18 followers. When wet weather delayed them, Dieffenbach found solace in gathering information about his guides and their tribe. He found the surroundings too monotonous to be worthy of exploration. Two days later their route lay to the east, past a picturesque pa on a pumice cliff above a creek. He found the track rough and broken, with formations of rock as though they were castles, and deep ravines containing scrub. The scant vegetation of ferns and coarse grass gave the region a dreary aspect. There was however no shortage of water at their camps. One evening he noted that "the landscape assumed that clear autumnal aspect which is so pleasing in Europe".

On 4 May they passed through a forest of matai and totara, with heavy undergrowth to make travelling tedious. That night they camped near the Waikato River. Dieffenbach realised that its blue clarity at that point came from the snows of Mount Ruapehu. The next two days they passed through country "in the highest degree curious to the geologist", and the wilderness of the Waipapa tributary of the Waikato. What a pity it was that Dieffenbach's Maori guides did not take him to a rock cleft in the Waipapa, where Maori rock paintings were many years later to be of great interest to archaeologists. Pieces of obsidian denoted an approach to a centre of volcanic action. Friendly Maoris met them with welcome supplies of food and took them to their pa where 400 lived. On 8 May Dieffenbach made his first inspection of hot springs, and two days later was delighted with stupendous ponds of boiling mud. On 11 May the party reached Lake Taupo, and greeted its first view with delight. Although a war party had left a pa on the western shore to raid enemies further south, men, women and children brought food in their canoes to the strangers to establish a friendly understanding. One may assume that Dieffenbach



and Symonds had the capacity to make enduring friendships in their travels.

The Taupo Maoris told Dieffenbach that the lake was more dangerous than the sea. He did not feel inclined to agree, because he had found Swiss lakes calm, but he wrote: "I have always indeed made a point in New Zealand of keeping my patience and composure in all discussions with the natives, and have in consequence fared well." This must have been one of the factors in the success of his personal relations. Local advice should be respected, and the Maoris had every reason to fear storms on the wide expanses of the lake.

After two days Dieffenbach and Symonds voyaged in a very large canoe along the rugged western shores of the lake. Men, women, children, dogs and pigs all piled in. As the winds and waves rose, the pakehas saw the wisdom of respecting the lake. The party camped for the night in a cove in Western Bay. When they reached Tokaanu the following day, they received a friendly welcome at Te Rapa pa, where the Maoris fired off muskets in their honour. The paramount chief, Te Heuheu was away on a war excursion to the south.

Dieffenbach's enjoyment of a feast of food and eloquence was dampened by a refusal by the Maoris to relax their tapu protecting "Tongariro". He wrote that he hoped to be relieved of this blighted prospect by a little negotiation. In the event, he was not so relieved. It must be noted that J. C. Bidwill, a botanist, had defied the local tapu some two years before when he had made the first ascent of Ngauruhoe alone. Ruapehu had not been climbed. The first attempt by Governor George Grey in the fifties was similarly obstructed by tapu, and it was not till well over 20 years later that men reached the top of Ruapehu. Perhaps Dieffenbach was not so much interested in gaining Ngauruhoe or Ruapehu as he would have been to have climbed Tongariro, 6,458 feet, whose active crater would have delighted his scientific curiosity. What a contrast it would have made to the slumberous Egmont. He found consolation, however, in the hot springs and fumeroles where the "Waikato" (the Tongariro of today's map) entered Lake Taupo in a delta.

The scene from the hills fringing the lake was marked by vapours issuing from hundreds of crevices and subterranean noises. Dieffenbach wrote with animation of these various



phenomena as an artist would describe a clearing thunderstorm. He made a trip to the south, past the hill named after the wife of Tongariro "Pihanga te Waheni na Tongariro", to the open country whence he described Ngauruhoe and Tongariro, and Lake Rotoaira. His party spent a night in a pa at this lake in splendid surroundings of bush and cultivation. But alas the Maoris again refused permission to climb Ngauruhoe, only four hours away, and he blamed Bidwill for having broken Maori law. On 21 May the party returned to Taupo, driving before them two pigs given by their hosts of Lake Rotoaira.

They visited the secluded lake of Rotopounamu, surrounded by heavy scrub and bush. On returning to the pa at Tokaanu they met two missionaries, Brown from Tauranga and Chapman from Rotorua. Dieffenbach prophesied that the scenery of Taupo was such that it would "attract visitors from all parts of the world". He further promised that the friendly Maoris would receive travellers well if they came without arrogant and ridiculous prejudices.

On 25 May the pakehas canoed to the mouth of the Tongariro River, where they saw embalmed heads at a pa. Later they continued the canoe journey to a pa at Motutere, where they were lodged in a church of this Christian settlement. He noted the injurious effects of clearing the bush by burning, and exhorted future settlers to avoid such wasteful destruction. He also recorded the naïve ideas of the local Maoris, derived, he said, from missionary teachings, that Europeans were divided into four classes: missionaries, soldiers, devils in the form of captains, merchants and gentlemen, and lastly, slaves being artisans, sailors and servants. He noted the antipathies encouraged by Protestants against Roman Catholics and vice versa, which gave the Maoris opportunity to continue feuds under the cloak of religious intolerance.

Dieffenbach and Symonds resumed their journey on 27 May. With only three Maoris as guides and porters they had to abandon some of their specimens, and even to carry a load for themselves. They found the walking rough and tiresome along the lake beach of soft sand and pumice pebbles. The following day they tramped along the borders of the lake, met and slaughtered some wild pigs as their provisions were low, and by nightfall reached the outlet of the lake flowing to the Waikato River.

Their route to the Rotorua Lakes lay past Mount Tauhara, in rain and over broken country. Symonds was ill, and the only medicine that Dieffenbach could give him was tea brewed from manuka leaves with a dash of alum water. Sunshine on 30 May dried wet clothes and restored dampened spirits. Regaining the valley of the Waikato they found potatoes, leeks and cabbages growing wild. Food storage pits nearby were filled with potatoes; one pit had been left open for the use of hungry travellers. Mist came down again but the next morning they were joined by two Maoris bound for the north and these they persuaded to act as guides and porters to Lake Rotomahana, reached by following a bank of the Waikato.

A variety of waterfowl and presents of potatoes and fish from Maoris at this lake made an agreeable diet, and Dieffenbach found many thermal wonders to excite him. He also visited Lake Tarawera and Rotokakahi. On 4 June a bushed walk took the pakehas towards Rotorua. Dieffenbach found "the morning was fresh and stirring, and our road as beautiful as the primitive wildness of the country could make it". Chapman, the missionary, gave them good shelter for a week, at his station by the lake. The subsequent journey through bush and hilly country took Dieffenbach and Symonds to the Te Papa mission station at Tauranga. After resting for a few days they walked across country to Matamata, and thence to the Thames and Auckland.

Thus these two men completed their long trip. They had met no continuing hardships, and were never deserted by their Maori guides. Though their diet was often monotonous, it was sufficient and, at times, plentiful. They had not been pioneers in any physical sense, but Dieffenbach's keen observations established him in the annals of science in New Zealand and subsequent generations turned to his volumes for enlightenment about the young colony. In 1855 and at the age of 44 years, Dieffenbach died, following an appointment as supernumerary professor of geology in Germany. Symonds was accidentally drowned in the Manukau the same year in which he had accompanied Dieffenbach, at the age of 31. There is no doubt that had he lived longer, Symonds would have accomplished further expeditions to the interior of the North Island, where his adventurous disposition and understanding of Maori customs would have found a satisfying outlet.

*Bishop Selwyn of the Raukumaras*

IF THE COUNTRY to be explored in New Zealand had some diversity with its bushed enchantments offset by grizzling rivers, sparkling lakes and grassed plains, the characters of the explorers themselves had both differences and distinctions. If the men whose work is described in these pages had been gathered together in a hall, there would have been dogged wrinkled faces, smooth ones, some bearded, others fiery with constant exposure to sun and wind.

Perhaps the most ascetic of all would have been George August Selwyn, the first Anglican Bishop of New Zealand, in his early thirties at the time of the events now described. He was both a scholar and an athlete, sensitive and resolute. His undoubted physical and mental vigour served him well. At Eton and Cambridge he excelled at the classics and at swimming, riding and walking; essential achievements for an evangelising churchman who took seriously his tasks in a new land peopled with a native race and marked by natural obstacles of ranges and rivers.

On his voyage to Auckland early in 1842 Selwyn acquired other useful accomplishments; a mastery of the Maori language and a knowledge of navigation. After he had made his headquarters in Northland, Selwyn decided to set forth on what he called a "visitation tour". As a militant bishop he determined to straighten up both his clergy and their Maori flocks in matters of denominational discipline. As an Anglo-Catholic he was disturbed by the free and mutual relations between the Wesleyans and the Anglicans. Actuated by zeal, and bodily fit for endurance, he exemplified the ideals of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel which backed him with the necessary funds and published his journal, extracted from letters he wrote to his family back in England.

It is not difficult to imagine the anticipation Selwyn felt as he made his plans. Like his predecessor Samuel Marsden he was



secure in his faith that overcame doubts and fears of the perils ahead. His companion was his friend William Martin, two years younger, and a fellow scholar at Cambridge, whom he had persuaded to migrate to New Zealand as chief justice. The two men had another common devotion: the welfare of the Maoris. Martin had not the robust health of Selwyn but his nervous energy proved equal to the demands of the long journey of 1842.

Early in November, Selwyn and Martin sailed in the Government brig *Victoria* from New Plymouth for Waikanae. This sea voyage greatly reduced the time it would have taken to walk overland. Octavius Hadfield, missionary at Waikanae, took them to his other station at Otaki. He was a strong influence for peace with the Maori people among whom he lived and shared their discomforts and rigorous diet of flour and potatoes. He loved the Maoris, as they trusted him, and followed the missionary tradition of long walks as routine necessity.

Selwyn and Martin went with Hadfield in his boat to the Ohau River mouth, and thence walked to the Manawatu, where large bonfires gave an agreeable welcome. After a day spent in Sunday services the party went up the Manawatu River in six canoes, each manned by eight Maoris skilled at poling against the turgid brown current.

Few motorists today pause to think, as they speed across the Manawatu bridge, of the early days of settlement when rivers were a satisfactory highway. Each pakeha traveller in Selwyn's party had his own canoe. Selwyn described his as "a most easy pleasant conveyance". As he sat, he read his mail and newspapers from England, but found time to admire the beauty of the scenery, with its grass flats and calm reaches, stately bush and abundant bird life. Thus three days passed. Further up the valley the canoes entered the gorge, a beautiful mountain pass, as it were, with high cliffs and bold outcrops staring down from the bush, and a rapid where the contents of the canoes had to be unloaded and carried to calmer waters. They passed several Maori settlements above the gorge, and on 12 November reached the highest navigable part of the river.

Then began the journey overland, through belts of bush and across grass plains. After crossing a longer stretch of bush, Hadfield took his leave and returned to his mission duties at



Waikanae, and the bishop gave a service to his party of 30 Maoris. His narrative is attractive for precision as for style. When he wrote that the infant Manawatu had "precipitous wooded banks feathering down to the stream" he was using an image that any writer could envy. He found the climate "hot, but rarely sultry; bright, but not glaring".

On 14 November Selwyn noted of the Wairarapa that it was "a noble plain . . . covered, in almost every part, with grass, without a bush or tree of any kind . . .". The party headed through what is now Hawke's Bay, with the snowy Range of Ruahine clear on the horizon; a future stamping-ground for another missionary-explorer, William Colenso. The line of path crossed several rivers, and the areas of grassy downs that lay between them. Camp that night was in the bed of the Waipawa River. The following day was spent at an island settlement on a small lake. Selwyn noted that the local chief who had harangued him "in a flowing blanket with all the dignity of a Roman senator" on his departure was dressed "in a complete English suit of white jean, with white cotton stockings, shoes, neck-cloth, and shirt complete". The chief's wife carried the bishop on her back to the boat to save his shoes and stockings from a dowsing.

Food seems to have been plentiful. Wild pigs were in the bush and scrub. Eels, birds and potatoes would have given some variety. Perhaps the wanderers fared better than Hadfield back in Waikanae, because they would have received due hospitality wherever they were welcomed. From Ahuriri, site of the present Napier, canoes gave access to a camp. Arch-deacon William Williams and the Rev. W. C. Dudley had joined the party and Selwyn wrote that at the camp a tent was pitched "for the first Chief Justice, the first Bishop and the first Arch-deacon of New Zealand". On 18 November they rose at 4 a.m., crossed the harbour and walked for the day.

The coastal travelling was somewhat rough. Tall ferns that impeded their way caused them to climb many high cliffs; one such diversion took an hour to climb. It was difficult to find water. Selwyn was perceptive to the usual morning hymn of the birds of the bush and referred appreciatively to Joseph Banks's comparison of their song with that of "a concert of silver bells". On 21 November they reached Dudley's mission

station at Wairoa, "a very pretty station with a beautiful river winding through an extensive plain". A day's rest was welcome in such surroundings. A beach walk led to Nuhaka, near Mahia Peninsula, well known today to railcar passengers on the Gisborne line.

Selwyn was unwell on 24 November and rode a horse, but he recovered the next day. The route now lay overland as the coast-line was too broken for foot travel. Two days later at Turanga (Gisborne), Williams was officially installed as Archdeacon and appropriate services were held. After a spell of three days Selwyn and Martin and their Maoris walked along the shores and beaches of Poverty Bay to Pakarae. By 1 December they had walked under the spectacular Gable End Foreland, at whose base they clambered over rocks and through fine caverns. A day of over 14 hours toil saw them past Tolaga Bay. The following day they passed Anaura Bay where in October 1769 Captain Cook had anchored and written in his Journals: "Friday 20th . . . made sail in shore in order to look into two Bays that appeared to our view about 2 Leagues to the northward of the Foreland: the southernmost we could not fetch, but in the other we anchor'd about 11 o'clock in 7 fathom water a black sandy bottom; . . . This bay is not so much sheltered from the sea as I at first thought it was . . .

"Saturday 21st. . . . In the Evening it fell Moderate and we landed and found 2 small streams of fresh water and the natives to all appearances very friendly and peaceable, on which account I resolved to stay one day at least to fill a little water . . .

"Sunday 22nd . . . as the getting the Water from the shore proved so very tedious on account of the surf, I resolved upon leaving this place in the morning and Accordingly at 5 AM we weigh'd and put to Sea. This Bay is called by the Natives *Tegadoo*, . . . but as it has nothing to recommend it so I shall give no description of it. There is plenty of wild sellery and we purchased of the natives about 10 or 15 pounds of sweet Potatoes, they have pretty large Plantations of these, but at present they are scarce it being too early in the season. . . ."

Selwyn noted that Anaura Bay was abounding in lovely scenery, and his impression was far more favourable than that of Captain Cook. In fact, even today Anaura Bay is a place of great natural beauty, and its Maori owners respect it accordingly.

The day's journey continued to Tokomaru Bay, where a small vessel was at anchor, and up the steep Tawiti valley, and along a flat summit where in the twilight they could glimpse an outline of "the distant mountain Ikurangi (the Parnassus of New Zealand) with its two peaks, and others near it stood out in the face of the sky". Ikurangi would have been the mountain now mapped as Hikurangi, 5,606 feet, and said to be the first place in the New Zealand mainland to be greeted by the rays of the rising sun.

The party made a descent through bush hollows, helped in the darkness by glow-worms. The Maoris in the rear-guard lit fires at the summit of the spur to light up the path for those ahead. Bed was not made till 11.30 p.m.

By now the pakehas must have been very fit. On 3 December a trail over sand and shingle led to the Waiapu Valley, where lay the large pa of Rangitukia and the mission house of James Stack, who acted for William Williams. Stack had begun his career as a Wesleyan missionary in the Bay of Islands. His knowledge of Maori was good. Later he accepted lay service with the Church Missionary Society, and took up his difficult post on the East Coast in the heart of the vigorous Ngati Porou tribe.

The peak of Hikurangi still dominated the scenery, and Selwyn made another reference to the "double head of Ikurangi" and the satellites of "Aurangi (Aorangi), Taitai and Wariki" as the sun set. A full congregation of Maoris took part in services on the following day.

Selwyn was anxious to reach Tauranga. There was no ship in which they could sail and to walk around the coast seemed lengthy. A direct line to the Bay of Plenty seemed to provide a short route, and there was only one substantial range, the Raukumara, as a barrier. When Selwyn made enquiries about this short cut he learnt that the Maoris had an old war trail from Rangitukia to Opotiki. Elders in the tribe knew of this trail, but it had not been used in recent years and would be overgrown. He resolved to attempt this route; that it would be exploring in the pakeha sense of the word was fortuitous. At 4 p.m. on 5 December he left for Wakawitira. Stack accompanied him and Martin, and their 20 Maoris, carried food and were armed with hatchets.



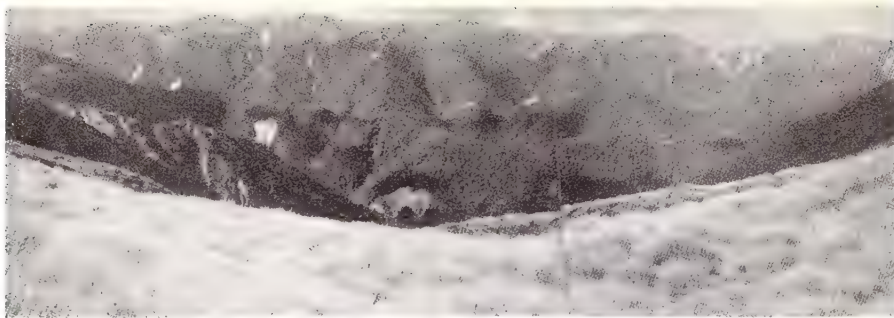
The first day's travel up the Waiapu Valley gave an indefinite number of river fords, with Hikurangi shrouded in mist and lesser hills clear. The next day the party left the river and took an old Maori path overgrown with young growth and old trees to a former pa site with a noble view of Hikurangi, bursting through its veil of clouds. They descended back to the river and again made many fords; so Selwyn characterised the whole as "a day of as much wading as walking". Lighter men than Selwyn were in the habit of allowing their guides to carry them across every ford, but he declined to add his weight, however modest, to the backs of Maoris already bearing heavy loads. Another day included a long bush ascent, with the necessity of carrying water to the camp made high on the range.

A start at 4 a.m. on 8 December was graced by the melody of bird song from every corner of the bush. Clouds hid the mountain tops. Being a warpath, the route clung to the highest ridges. One can assume that the pakehas would have been lost without Maoris whose bushcraft and local knowledge took them with confidence over very rough country. In the evening they all descended to the valley of the Raukokore, with high bush banks, and a grand amphitheatre on the edge of a "deep still pool of the purest water". Selwyn revived his tired porters and guides by making them a medicine he called "rongoa", composed of boiled water with chocolate, flour and sugar, and designed to nourish and warm men sleeping in damp surroundings.

Morning service on 9 December preceded a tramp down the Raukokore River, with its many fords and luxuriant bush backdrop. At one place there was a gorge only 7 feet wide, between two precipices, where the rays of the sun never entered and arching trees blocked out the sky. The party avoided a succession of gorges by taking a steep climb over a hill and down the other side to the Kereu stream. The descent was an abrupt one and could only be made by improvising a rope made from the cords lashed around packages. Below this steep country Stack had to be carried on a stretcher as he was ill. The last day of the crossing gave better going. After the inevitable river fording the party was heartened by an up-valley breeze heralding the sea at Te Kaha, a serene little coastal settlement.

Services on 11 December were varied with Selwyn's remonstrances with Maoris whom he labelled "heathens". The next





### TORTUOUS BUSH

A panorama from an open basin of snowgrass shows part of the Ruahine Range crossed by Colenso. Bush valleys are riven by river gorges. Inland Patea lies to the left of the ranges.



MISSIONARY  
EXPLORER  
William Colenso in  
1861.



Charles Heaphy, V.C.



Thomas Brunner in later life.



Heaphy made this graphic sketch of Brunner and his dog Rover on their perilous climb of the Miko cliff, 106 feet, on the Coast in 1846.

day the party was met by a church catechist from Opotiki. Tauranga was reached on 17 December, where in 1838 the Rev. A. N. Brown had established a mission. There they met the Acting-Governor, Willoughby Shortland. Selwyn's pioneering was virtually over, for the remainder of his walk to Auckland was over tracks used previously by pakeha travellers. On 3 January 1843 he wrote: "the suit which I wore was kept sufficiently decent, by much care, to enable me to enter Auckland by daylight; and my last remaining pair of shoes (thin ones) were strong enough for the light and sandy walk of six miles which remained from Manakau to Auckland . . . land which I have bought for the site of the cathedral; a spot which I hope may hereafter be traversed by the feet of many Bishops, better shod and far less ragged than myself."

Selwyn finished his account of the long walk by a "Tabular Statement of Voyages and Journeys of the Visitation Tour" including 1,180 miles by sea (from the Bay of Islands and back), and 1,097½ miles by land and rivers; a total of 2,277½ miles. For this chapter the most significant analysis of the land and river travel figures was that he walked 762 miles, rode 86½ miles, and boated or canoed 249 miles.

His later career, and that of Martin, was linked with a judicial championing of the rights of the Maoris. In serving both white and brown races, and in their respective spheres of religion and law, Selwyn and Martin were also influential in administration. Selwyn, Martin and Stack died within five years of each other, examples of men whose lives included great strain and tension; yet they lived to a reasonable age, and, at the end of it, could look back to great days of work as well as a few of exploration.

There is a great contrast between the two highlights of Selwyn's journey. The first pakeha trip from the Manawatu to Hawke's Bay has been repeated thousands of times, though not through the gorge by canoe. The Raukumara crossing, however, has only been done twice since the 1842 trip. Hikurangi's nobility attracts a few climbers, but few live up the East Coast, and the mountain is by no means a Mecca. The legend of scrub and bushed cliffs between the East Cape and the Bay of Plenty has been sufficient to discourage most trampers.

The only narrative reference to the Raukumaras in tramping literature is found in the *Tararua Story* (1946). G. B. Wilson,



Norman Elder, and — Watson considered that the second crossing of the Raukumaras had been made within a few years of Selwyn's. It is not surprising that Wilson and Elder were associated with the third crossing. They seem resolutely to have set their faces against the tempting problems of tramping and climbing in the South Island. As good North Islanders, Wilson and Elder have bush-whacked and climbed in virtually every important range north of Wellington. Their combined knowledge is a sum whose like will not be familiar to later generations. Both men have interests in botany and a certain quizzical aggressiveness that their ranges are the best in the country, which is as it should be.

The third crossing in the early thirties dispelled the tales of excessive difficulty. Wilson pointed out that the Maori route crossed the Raukokore; he did not waste energy in attempting to follow down its gorges. He wrote too that the crossing was no more difficult than one of the tough ones in the Tararuas. That was not softening the evaluation of the trip, because many mountaineers know that scrub and gorges in the Tararuas can be more exasperating than their counterparts in South Westland. Further, Wilson admitted that papa cliffs were part of the experiences to be gained on the Raukumaras.

The Wilson-Elder crossing of the range, then, seems to have had no exceptional troubles until the passage from the Raukokore to the Kereu. I quote Wilson in full: "We found ourselves dropping down vertical bush faces so steep and with the large trees so far apart that, without a rope, we could not have returned by the same route without cutting steps. It soon became obvious that this was leading to flax and papa cliffs up to 1,000 ft. high so we returned by sidling. This cost us a day, also water that night and next morning, so we dined on cake, corned beef and brandy, breakfasting without the brandy, and found it a good mixture for a hard day. The morning bird song at the Kereu Forks was unbelievably musical. There seemed to be thousands of birds singing in perfect harmony. Birds and pigs were a feature of the trip. We watched and listened to a blue wattled crow and saw North Island robins and the rare saddleback."

In retrospect it is clear that Marsden, Selwyn and Colenso (see the next chapter) made great contributions to knowledge of



the interior of the North Island. Their friendship with Maoris gave them a deserved advantage. Not the least of their virtues was that they wrote graphically and accurately about their travels, both to attract other men to their footsteps and to record details for future generations of New Zealanders, hungry for information about each journey of exploration.

Other denominations took their part in the story of exploration as well as the Anglicans. The inaccessible mountain lake of Waikaremoana was first visited by Europeans in 1841 when Father Baty, a Roman Catholic, and Colenso arrived within a few hours of each other to debate their beliefs with an attentive congregation as the umpire. The Wesleyans took the honours for exploration in the Waikato. Such missionaries as William White and John Whiteley were active both on the coast and inland. Their friendly relations with the Anglicans before Selwyn disturbed them were productive of exchanges of information, and, in spite of Maori tribal warfare, they persevered with long journeys of some peril.

In more recent years clergymen have made their name as alpine explorers. Canon H. E. Newton made his base at Ross in Westland. With Dr. E. Teichelmann of Hokitika and the guide Alex Graham, he made many first ascents before the First World War and established fine details of alpine topography at the head of the Fox Glacier, climbing from exposed high camps laboriously carried to places where today mountaineers rely on huts, snow caves or air-dropped supplies. The Rev. J. T. Crozier was associated with exploration of peaks in north-east Otago. Perhaps if Selwyn had lived in the present age he would have found outlet for his restless vigour in mountain fastnesses where men can satisfy their spiritual needs away from civilisation, and, in contemplating nature, can verify their values to sustain them in their doubts and their beliefs.

*William Colenso of the Ruahines*

TRAVELLERS SWEEPING THROUGH the undulations of Hawke's Bay in the rail-car may spare a glance to the west. There rises the Ruahine Range, 75 miles long, from its tail bedraggling in the Manawatu Gorge to its top-knot cresting towards the Kawekas. Aircraft passengers also can take a view if they want one on a fine day; a long rock-riven range, sprawling above bushline to rocky outcrops larded with snows in winter. The topography of the Ruahine Range is somewhat confused by thick scrub, twisted rivers and dominant spurs that vie with the main range for attention.

The Ruahines are higher and cleaner than their southern sisters the Tararuas. Although prominent from Hawke's Bay they are less accessible from the south-east, where the trinity of Ruapehu, Ngauruhoe and Tongariro are shielded on their volcanic plateau by the Kaimanawa Range. Ways of crossing the Ruahines were numerous and even today they are regarded highly by the tramping fraternity. Whatever route is used demands some skill with map and compass, as fog and scrub can be obstacles to stretch the hours to days if mistakes are made.

More than that of any other man, the name of William Colenso is wedded to the Ruahine Range. This man of letters and many other parts combined the zeal of missionary pioneer with the curiosity of a botanical explorer; an ideal fusion when Maori souls lay ready for the reaping and new plant species awaited the coming of a discerning eye. A. G. Bagnall and G. C. Petersen have recorded an excellent biography of Colenso from his birth on 7 November 1811 in Cornwall to his death near the close of that century. The student of exploration will find this biography an abiding pleasure to read, completed as it was by writers who themselves had experienced the country they described and thus were able to select the most significant quotations from the writings of their subject and to add topo-

graphical summaries and explanations where necessary. Interesting too because of the descriptions of the Maori lore, superstition and ritual that had their place in Maori bushcraft and pathfinding.

As a printer's apprentice, Colenso's trade led to New Zealand by way of London and the Church Missionary Society. His experiences in the Bay of Islands as printer and lay preacher gave him keen insight into Maori life and social problems. In his late twenties Colenso made his first field trip. With the missionary W. Williams he visited the East Coast of the North Island.

An inland journey to the bushed mountain lake of Waikaremoana and long coastal walks prepared Colenso both for further understanding of the Maoris and for more arduous tramping. In 1844 he was stationed as deacon with the Ahuriri mission in Hawke's Bay. Here was occasion for long and purposeful travel to the range that he made his own.

When he determined to visit some of the westernmost of his Maori flock he scorned an easy circuitous path and chose instead to attempt a crossing of the Ruahines. His destination was Inland Patea, where a remote tribe lived secure in the bush. Maori elders warned Colenso that his life might be endangered in the high country, but he went ahead with his plans of discovery. He took as guide a Maori who had made the crossing as prisoner of war and who had later made good his escape by returning the same way. Mawhatu, as he was called, was dubious about the venture but was persuaded by Colenso against his wishes.

Thus early in February 1845 Colenso, Mawhatu and some porters struck through swampy country and scrub in rain. A passing illness and further rain delayed progress. When the weather cleared they made many fords of the Waipawa River and took the Makaroro branch past slips and beech forest. Colenso's interest was greatly stimulated by the sight of new and rare botanical species. The going was so narrow and choked with debris that the party took a tongue-like spur between two streams, and aimed for a summit known as Te Atua-o-mahuru holding some snow on its ridge. A small spring of water refreshed the group. Colenso sent Mawhatu and another Maori over the range to get food, as they were six days out and provisions were short. Colenso spent Sunday with the remainder of the party in



religious service and discussion. No scouts returned that evening.

The following day they set off through the bush and matted scrub, following scant traces of the men ahead. The open country on the top of the range gave them a great panorama above Hawke's Bay with a sight of the inland volcanoes. The abundant flora made Colenso jubilant with his discoveries crammed eagerly into his shirt and hat. Seeing no signs of their foragers the party returned down to the camp by the spring. Then with the arrival of Mawhatu and his companion came the news that although they had reached a pa near Patea it was empty both of Maoris and food. There was no course but to return. Such disappointments were common fare for early explorers. Colenso's health was affected by the incessant river wading; rheumatism succeeded sciatica. But he knew that the nine days' journey had not been in vain. He would try again. His zeal and his flowers called strongly, and experience would be on his side next time.

Colenso's writing was vivid. His biography includes apt quotations. Consider the ecstasy implicit in his first impression of the mountain flowers of the Ruahine summits: ". . . the lovely appearance of so many and varied beautiful and novel wild plants and flowers richly repaid *me* the toil of the journey and the ascent—for never before did I behold at one time in N.Z. such a profusion of Flora's stores! In one word, I was overwhelmed with astonishment and stood looking with all my eyes, greedily devouring and drinking in the enchanting scene before me."

Before Colenso returned to the Ruahines there were other pedestrian feats accomplished as necessary interludes in his work. The coastal route from Hawke's Bay to Palliser Bay in the Wairarapa and so to Wellington was a trudge of trudges. It had not the acute river hazard of South Westland, and if the loose gravel crunched by Colenso's boots was tiring it was better going than the exhausting slippery boulders, and the sheer cliffs and belts of scrub that were to be bypassed by Brunner and Heaphy in their struggles along the West Coast of the South Island.

Other trails followed by Colenso in the course of his activity were from the neighbourhood of Napier's site to Tarawera by way of Lake Taupo. Today we know this trail as the Napier-



Taupo road and it is an interesting commentary on New Zealand history that such an old Maori trail became a pioneer missionary route, later a pakeha track and ultimately a graded road. Colenso was well served by his Maori guides. He must have felt at one with nature and with mankind as he covered territory never before seen by white men. It is difficult not to envy him his opportunities for enterprise, whether geographical or botanical.

Colenso had the additional reward of knowing that his religious teaching was helping Maori converts to come to terms with a changing land. He was needed also to uphold their cause against the land hunger of settlers.

While practical problems of mission establishment were sufficient for a period, there were those isolated Maori folk at Inland Patea to entice Colenso to their fastnesses. As he could not persuade Maoris to accompany him across the Ruahines from Hawke's Bay, he decided to go through to Taupo and thus to reach Patea from the north. A crossing of the Ruahines would thus be made from the west on the way home. On 9 February 1847 Colenso and five Maoris set out on a week of travel from Napier via the head of the Mohaka River. He was handicapped by an injured ankle but by 17 February the party reached the eastern shores of Lake Taupo.

Following neighbourhood excursions on short rations, keen religious debate with passing Maoris, and a visit to Lake Rotoaira, Colenso and his guides headed south through country first traversed by the Wesleyan James Buller and the Anglican Henry Williams in 1840. Colenso was able to contrast the rambling craters of Tongariro with the snow covered Ruapehu and Paretaitonga. As he progressed, rain swept up from the south and a forced camp was typical of bleak and cold experience. A further day of storm caused the Maoris concern that Colenso had broken tapu and therefore attracted wrath from their native gods but Colenso's anxieties were focused not so much on his own plight but on that of his specimens of plants. On 22 February they reached the banks of the Moawhango River, and travelled steadily over hilly country broken occasionally by heavy bush, trackless and foreboding.

But it was some consolation to be nearing the Patea villages. The party allayed their hunger with roasted stalks of cabbage

leaves. The following day they arrived at a plantation village early in the morning. There a feast of hot potatoes restored their vigour and they continued to the hill kainga of Motuku. Another day took them to Te Awarua, the Patea village which Mawhatu had reached some two years previously. The track was well defined, and Colenso's sense of achievement was satisfying. The whole party fed well to give them strength for a crossing of the great inland range of the Ruahines that was now their barrier route to Hawke's Bay. Bush, fern and scrub were the approaches to the higher country. These relatively feasible obstacles gave way to riverbed travel, with pools, gorges and debris of boulders and slips to try their endurance.

A study of a detailed map of the Ruahines at this point shows a main range running approximately north and south with sub-ranges hiving off east and west, and, the spurs taking any direction as though a child was haphazardly drawing them in as fishbones on a spine. Rivers run between the sub-ranges and streams between the spurs as veins on an ageing cheek. A light green tone indicates the forested areas of our map and red lines blazon the tracks of the nineteen fifties. There are no contours to show the blunt gable ends of ridges or the steep valley sides of the streams.

If a study of Colenso's route is somewhat bewildering on a map, how much more bewildering it was when on 25 February his party was met by fog above scrub level. Colenso described this dry fog on a windless day as a separate mass propelled as though by a furtive power. The day's travel resolved itself into a confusion of slips, scrub, windfalls, rotten logs and thick beech forest. In the event the party had taken the wrong turning and by nightfall they lay exhausted, supperless and waterless. Across in the hill pa Matuku, friendly Maoris looked in vain for the sight of a camp-fire on the open country.

The next day in this land of olearias and hebes began with a climb through wet-misted scrub. Four hours took them at last to the 5,020 foot summit of Te Atua-o-mahuru, the key link that connected them with the journey of 1845. After a prayer of thanks, Colenso and his Maoris headed east to the former camping-place by the spring. Alas, there was no water for thirsty men till a Maori located some further down the ridge. A spell for a feed encouraged them to continue down the track

now named after Colenso to a bivouac in the valley of the familiar Makaroro tributary of the Waipawa River. Colenso had crossed his Range. Further botanical discoveries added to his joy.

The remainder of the journey was the hundred-fold crossing of the river, a Sunday spent resting, and a reunion with Hawke's Bay Maoris when Colenso married nine eager couples. By 3 March he was back at his mission station at Waitangi.

Colenso's subsequent career was stormy. His adultery with a Maori woman caused his expulsion from his mission in 1853. He braved provincial and national politics, worked for years on a monumental Maori dictionary and on botanical research. He made four further crossings of the Ruahines, the last being in 1852.

Over 60 years later a party led by a botanist, naturally enough a disciple in spirit of Colenso, followed his trail, found his spring, and revelled in the flowers of the alpine meadowland at Te Atua-o-mahuru and crossed down through the restless ghostly green beech forest to a friendly sheeprun homestead in the Inland Patea country.

Other men followed Colenso's call. Norman Elder, made the Ruahines his preserve, mapped their spurs, studied their history, and led a young tramping club to the many summits. Colenso's biographers diligently scoured his trails for the atmosphere they needed to back their knowledge and expression of his life. George Lowe, destined to make history on Mount Everest and at the South Pole found in the Ruahines a satisfying novitiate for adventures in the Southern Alps. G. B. Wilson, and other hardy Tararua trampers made long enterprising crossings and explorations of the Ruahines to prove that the North Island ranges had their rewards for those persistent enough to find them.

It is fitting that the pioneer work begun by Colenso with missionary zeal and made feasible by the loyalty and bushcraft of stalwart Maori guides should be an inspiration to future New Zealanders, where the open tops and bushed ranges stretch serenely on the horizon, encouraging travellers to find in toil and sweat the fortuitous satisfactions of achievement.



## 5

### *Charles Heaphy of the Karamea*

THIS CHAPTER takes us from New Zealand's North Island to the South and is closely linked with the association of Charles Heaphy with Thomas Brunner. Let the present story be credited to Heaphy as it is based on his own account of the first coastline journey from the West Wanganui Inlet to the Arahura. Supplementary references on the files of the *Nelson Examiner* make fascinating reading and contain news of the explorers in the field before they had returned to narrate their own adventures.

The first such item appeared on 20 June 1846 when the Rev. C. L. Reay had received a note from Heaphy carried by a Maori, Aperahama, who had arrived in Nelson. The note was dated 28 April from Cape "Foulweather" (Foulwind), and contained references to fearful places in cliffs where the old Maori ropes were rotten, and to good health weakened by want of vegetables. After stating that he and Brunner were unlikely to proceed to Port Cooper, as inland rivers would be flooded, he expected that "all the good folks (of Nelson) have been enjoying themselves rather more than we have, our trip thus far having been rather of the uncomfortable order".

The next item of 18 July was that another Heaphy letter had reached Nelson, this time addressed to Mr. Bishop, written in May below Cape "Foulweather" on the way to the Arahura, and containing this information "the road is the worst it is possible to conceive; steep, rocky coast, flooded rivers, and kia-kia (*kie-kie*) jungles. . . . It was our intention to cross over to Port Cooper, which is only a week's journey from Araura (Arahaura), but we learn that the rivers will be impassable in the winter."

An editorial the following month referred to the "return of Messrs. Brunner and Heaphy from exploring the western coast" and noted that their journey was more in the Maori manner than the pakeha "depending for sustenance, as they were obliged almost entirely to do, upon what was afforded by the



forest and the reefs at ebb tide" when using the trail of a former Maori party of war.

Subsequently an outline of Heaphy's narrative was published in the *Examiner* in serial form. He had left Nelson on 17 March with Brunner and Ekehu. When they crossed the Hauriri (Aorere) each man took a load of 35 lbs. of flour, with tea, sugar, pearl barley, powder, shot, survey instruments, books, boots and two blankets. The total swag weighed some 80 lbs. On 26 March they engaged a Maori as porter. The 20 tribesmen on the West Coast at West Wanganui considered "the traveller a fit subject for plunder", but, by way of exception, a friendly native took the party across the harbour in a canoe. Brunner and Heaphy resolved arguments with the hostile men under "E neho" with presents of tobacco. Rain, gales and heavy surf delayed departure till 31 March, when, "in capital spirits and condition", they made their way along the coastline to the south by stages.

They built a house of nikau leaves on 5 April and foraged for sea food. This included "the mutton fish or pawa (paua), although resembling indiarubber in toughness and colour, is very excellent and substantial food for explorers, both European and native". The paua is in fact satisfying food, and can be minced for fritters or fried as a steak after it has been wrapped in a cloth and beaten with stones or a hammer. The sea anemone, probably the Maori's "sea egg", "must be eaten to be comprehended . . . in eating it the eyes should be kept closely shut".

When the men came to rivers they forded with their clothes taken in bundles on their heads. A typical storm for two days on 8 April held them "detained by rain at encampment. At night the gale caused the water to rise so high as to break within a few feet of our huts, and to debar all passage along the beach: above us was a perpendicular cliff, and in front of us a swollen river, causing our situation to be at once unpleasant and exciting." It is interesting to see that Heaphy recognised that danger had its own stimulus. On 11 April there was some hair-raising cliff climbing, with rotten rope, and loose rock handholds looking down to the breakers below.

Three days later the path, as such, "led by some dangerous hollows, into which the waves rushed even at low water, and to

pass which required coolness and alacrity". High above this obstacle there was a place where "a slip or false step on any part of the ascent could not fail to be attended by fatal consequences". Often it would take the explorers all their time to cover 10 miles in a day. Another such rocky point was climbed by using flax bushes as holds. On 17 April they reached the formidable barrier of the "Wakapoai" River, now mapped as the Heaphy. The party had to follow this river up for a mile before a ford could be made. Another large river was the Karamea, draining a large area of mountainous country. They crossed this on a raft or "moki" (mokihi).

This craft was familiar in accounts of early South Island explorations. It consisted of six bundles of flax sticks, each bundle being some 10 inches in circumference and 20 feet long. Paddles had also to be fashioned. Heaphy wrote that "a mast with a blanket sail may be rigged if the wind be fair". As they crossed the Karamea their flax sticks absorbed water and they had to throw their dog overboard to keep their mokihi above its Plimsoll line. Heaphy also lightened the load by swimming on the last stretch of water to the shore.

Provisions were low by 23 April: 10 lbs. of flour, 2 lbs. of pork, and a few ounces of tea and sugar were all that remained. As they dined off cabbage-palm stems and mussels they must have wondered what the future held. Ekehu was an expert weka snarer, as drawn by Heaphy in an illustration to this book, and on 25 April weka was on the scanty menu. It was quite an eventful day on 28 April. They were confronted by the "Mokinui" (Mohikinui) River, but, despite its name, there was no adequate supply of flax sticks, so no raft could be made. The ford was a dangerous one, with rollers from the Tasman Sea sweeping up the mouth only a hundred yards away. To cross they used the pole method, by which the strongest man walked into the current, two hundred yards broad, and broke the force of the water. His companions followed, in step, and clinging to the pole. Heaphy recorded that "our poor dog . . . only with great difficulty reached the bank."

A tall Maori appeared, who had never before seen a white man. This was Aperahama, heading for Nelson to have a son baptised. As related, he agreed to carry a letter to Nelson reporting the progress of the exploring party. Heaphy described

him as "an exceedingly intelligent native . . . middle-aged, handsome and of very large stature".

By the end of April the party had reached the Buller River, the first objective of the expedition. Rain had flooded this large river, which drains terrain later explored by Brunner. Even though the immediate problem was how to return to Nelson, they decided that in spite of the worry about the lack of fresh food and the inevitable bad going on the coastline, they would keep moving south. They found an old canoe, repaired it in leaky places, could hold some balance as they lay in the bottom. Presumably Ekehu was paddler and navigator, because the pakehas crossed the Buller separately.

Storms and gales marked the month of May, but it must have cleared occasionally, for Heaphy referred to "The Southern Alps" as marked by Captain James Cook.

Ekehu, Jacky and Etai kept Heaphy and Brunner awake some nights by their chattering and their recitals of church services; more for their amusement, it must be admitted, than as spontaneous devotion. On 10 May Heaphy allowed a somewhat sardonic note to liven his narrative. "Go to the bush", he wrote, "if you would enjoy the sight of Nature in her loveliest aspect, fresh and beautiful. . . .

"Sleep by the side of the rushing river . . . and dream of its passage in the morning if you would enjoy repose healthful and invigorating. Rise with the appearance of the first streak of day. . . .

"Cross the high mountain, or strike into the dark unexplored forest, if you want excitement; and for quiet pleasure, watch the waterfowl on the lake. . . .

"And should you wish to enjoy a climate unequalled; go to Kawatiri (Buller); build yourself a house six feet long by four; spread your blanket on the ground; dry your clothes by degrees; get blinded by the smoke, drifting with the hail and rain in your eyes; amuse yourself for a week with eating fern-root, and—wish yourself comfortably at your coffee and toast by your own fireside in Nelson."

Thus the journey continued, and, with it, thoughts of Nelson province. On 13 May Ekehu brought in four penguins, two wekas and a pigeon. Heaphy did not write how the penguins tasted. Fern-root, however necessary, must have taken a lot of



chewing. His note on *mamaku*, the black-ribbed punga, read "when mixed with wine, sugar and spice in a tart (*mamaku*) might be mistaken for baked apple; at the 'Five Fingers' however, the illusion was not perfect. Detained by rain." The "Five Fingers" was a stretch of 15 miles of bad beach travelling mapped under that name by Captain Cook.

If headings were needed to describe such going, they could have been Cliffs, Beaches, Bush, Floods, Hunger. Some of the route was truly spectacular. The "Temiko" (Miko) cliff, for example, was too steep to be climbed without mountain devices. An illustration in this book, drawn by Heaphy, shows ladders of "ropy rata, lashed together with flax, with steps at irregular distances, the whole being very shaky and rotten . . . our baggage and the dog had to be hoisted up by a flax rope". The dog looks none too happy. The Miko cliff was so named because young shoots of the nikau palm were in the vicinity.

Beyond the cliff there was "Punahaere" now known to tourism as Punakaiki and famous for its pancake rocks. Neither Heaphy nor Brunner made any reference in their writings to these pancake rocks so it may be assumed they were not particularly impressed or that the trail lay through bush too thick to grant a view of them. From Punakaiki the party made good progress, heartened by a welcome and food from a group of Maoris. By 25 May a safe crossing of the Mawhera (Grey) River led to security and plenty to eat. Heaphy described the Maoris as constantly cooking and eating meals of potatoes, dried whitebait, eels, leeks, sprats and taro. Two days later the party tramped on again to Arahura.

This proved to be the southernmost point reached on the West Coast. The Arahura Maori settlement is one of the very few remaining in Westland. From it the explorers saw Mount Cook, described by Heaphy as "Te Hauraki which the natives assert is of the greatest elevation of any in the island". This reference to Aorangi and the sketch by Heaphy are "firsts" from the West Coast.\* Heaphy made other speculations about

\* For an explanation of how "Aorangi" could be transcribed as "Te Hauraki" see *The Great Journey* by Thomas Brunner, pages 52-3. Brunner called it "Te Hau rahi". Dr. Roger Duff, a noted authority on South Island Maori lore noted that it is likely that Ekehu heard Aorangi named Aoraki and called it Hao-raki.



topography in which he alluded to the West Coast as being the western half of the Port Cooper Country. Port Cooper was an early name for the harbour now known as Lyttelton. Two weeks gave a good rest at Arahura.

Heaphy gave relatively little space to a description of the homeward trip from Arahura, as he must have considered repetition unnecessary. By 14 June the party had travelled north, each taking a load of 60 lbs. of potatoes and 12 lbs. of whitebait, and had passed the Miko cliff. Bad weather delayed travel and they did not reach Cape Foulwind till 24 June, and the Buller till 29 June. As there was little flax to be had, their raft had to be made of totara drift wood, and then crossed the Buller River with the "same unpleasant forebodings of ill luck". Twenty minutes of hard paddling saw them safely across. Six days later they were at the Mohikinui, which they forded in three relays, using logs of white pine and they were also held up at the Karamea River.

The physical condition of the men was low in the middle of July. The diet of sea eggs was not appetising. Heaphy noted that it was more painful to carry packs of 25 lbs. on an empty stomach than twice that weight when well-fed. They had only the strength to walk an average of four miles a day. The cold winter weather must have been bitter to endure. Their homing dates and landmarks were 19 July at the Heaphy River, 4 August at the West Wanganui, 7 August in Massacre (Golden) Bay, and 19 August in Nelson.

Thus the stage was set for Brunner's long expedition from December 1846, as narrated in the following chapter. Heaphy had an interesting career ahead of him. His work as an artist was of lasting value and today is greatly admired. By the end of the forties he had gone north to Auckland and the Coromandel goldfields. His surveying and map-making gave him many years in the bush. He must have been extremely fit, and as wily in bush craft as any Maori. He was the only man in the New Zealand forces to win the Victoria Cross in the Maori Wars. This is the story.

When in 1863 the Waikato war broke out he was attached as a guide to small active parties of troops. The following year he was in a hard fight at Waiari on the Mangapiko River. A deep bend in the river was covered in manuka scrub and fern. There,

in the thick undergrowth that was familiar terrain after his West Coast experiences, he earned his decoration.

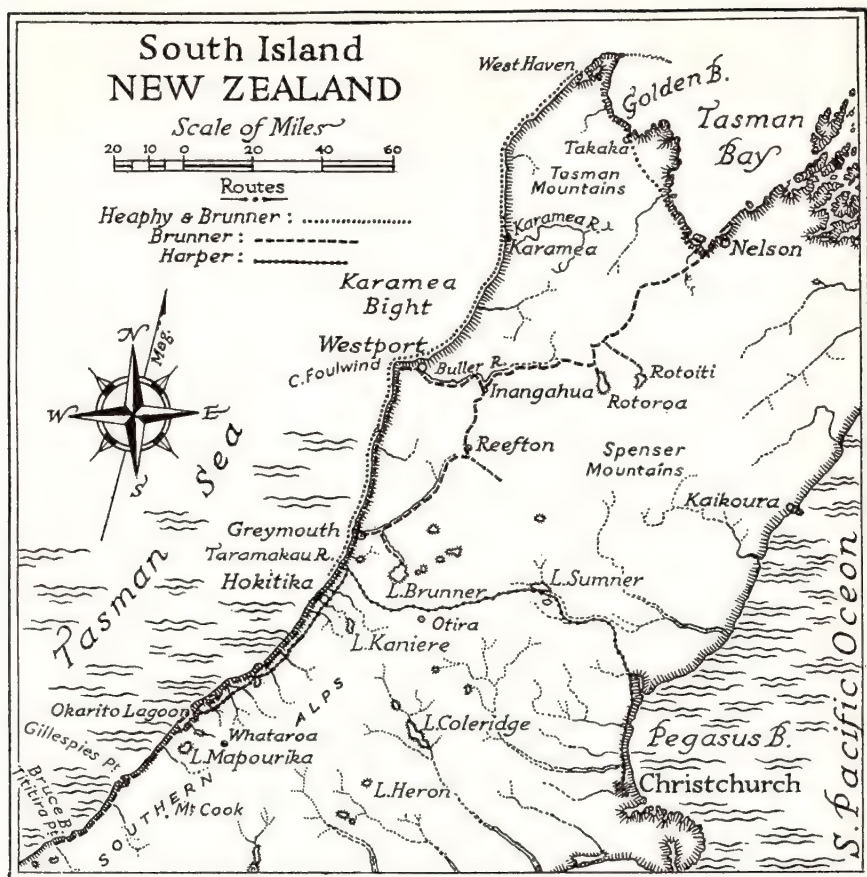
A bathing party from a British regiment was engaged by Maoris, armed with guns. In the fighting that followed, five soldiers and 41 Maoris died. Heaphy had some experience in medical work. In rescuing and attending a wounded soldier he was fired at. The range was close and he was lucky not to be killed; but though wounded himself he was successful in his rescue. A few days after the fight he wrote that the nature of the ground helped the Maoris, who were, of course, far more used to thick scrub than were the Imperial forces.

His own account of his experience was as follows: "I got a volley into me at about 5 yards from the scrub . . . I was only stunned for a time and afterwards took charge—sergeant's duty—of a party of 50th (the Regiment) in the absence of their officer. There was no doctor with us and I did what I could for the wounded. . . ."

Because Heaphy was not a regular British soldier he did not receive the award of the Victoria Cross when it was first applied for, although officers who approved of such an award included Major G. F. von Tempsky of the Forest Rangers, also famous for his skill as a bushman in the Maori Wars. General T. J. Galloway wrote to Governor Grey that Heaphy had given him much useful information about the bush country in the Waikato, and that the New Zealand troops had showed patience and had behaved gallantly whenever they fought. He further wrote that a Victoria Cross given to Heaphy would be an honour to the whole body of New Zealand guerrilla fighters. Thus Heaphy received his medal. Papers in the National Archives show that Heaphy himself was persistent in demanding that such a decoration be given.

Heaphy returned to surveying after the Maori wars, and later became a member of Parliament and a judge of the Maori Land Court. He died in Australia in 1881 at the age of 59. It is a great pity that no personal letters survive a pioneer such as Heaphy. A biography would make a fascinating study but in the absence of sufficient raw material, what can be done?

We can respect Heaphy for what we know of his life, and regret that no lively personal dimension of him can emerge from contemporary records.



The three notable journeys marked on this map included struggles along a rugged coastline. Harper's transalpine crossing of the Southern Alps lay to the west of Lake Sumner. Brunner's route down the Buller gorges was far more difficult and his exploration ranks as the greatest single journey made in New Zealand.



*Thomas Brunner of the Buller*

HISTORY CAN GIVE honour to men who never sought it as they faced hunger, privation and despair. One of the most honoured men in the story of New Zealand's exploration was Thomas Brunner. His aim was to traverse new country, find new ways for travel, and record for his fellows any discoveries of pastures, coal, timber or routes. His youth and enthusiasm gave vitality where energy passed what seemed to be the point of no return. His companions, Maoris, accepted his strong leadership as he accepted their skills in foraging and bushcraft. His task as surveyor gave him a background of brave tradition to endure what would have been, to some men, unendurable. The deeds of this party have a high place, far beyond the expectation of its contemporaries.

Nor are the deeds based on legend or myth; they were written in a journal with insight and revealing honesty of purpose. The exhilaration of achievement was linked oh so closely with the tedious routines and boredom of the obstacles of forest and river, headland and coastline. Accomplished feats are satisfying for their fortuitous trials. Had Brunner made his journeys by jeep, canoes, horseback or road they could have been written off as eccentricities. Because they were made on foot where no tracks existed they have an importance that has increased with the awareness of their difficulties. That no great results rewarded the explorer is immaterial. It was sufficient that Brunner persisted in his travels at the risk of his life and with the daily rejection of comfort. Today an aircraft can fly over his trails with no hint of the turbulence of doubt that shrouded the bushed wilderness over a hundred years ago.

Today towns, railways, roads, tunnels and bridges are well-defined features marking his progress down valleys and across river mouths. The past is as essential to the country as the present and the future. If Brunner found nothing of physical value he found himself and laid the foundations of dogged



enterprise that stimulated his successors to meet other discouragements in their own way and on different terms. Every new generation finds some nourishment from the examples of its predecessors. The feature of Brunner's stimulus to his countrymen was the considerable length of his time spent away from his fellow men and the way in which his patience was embedded in resolution even when patience seemed foolhardy, or, at the least unnecessary. If it was easy to turn back, Brunner scorned such a solution. His name is great because he moved forward.

William Brunner, father of Thomas, was born at Birmingham in 1796, and admitted as a solicitor in Oxford in 1817. In 1843 he was appointed as coroner for Oxford and in that career he held no less than 2,700 inquests. He was also legal agent for Oxford Parliamentary representatives. He died in 1877. So far as is known, Brunner's family included four daughters and three sons, of whom Thomas was the only one to migrate to New Zealand. He arrived in Nelson in 1841 with a New Zealand Company party under Captain Arthur Wakefield in the *Whitby*. After an apprenticeship he worked as a survey assistant, and two years later made his first exploring trip inland from Nelson on the instructions of F. Tuckett, surveyor to the settlement, who realised that new pastoral country was essential.

Another Oxford man entered the story: William Fox, ten years the senior of Thomas Brunner, who had been a lawyer, and arrived in Wellington in 1842. On the death of Arthur Wakefield in the Wairau affair, Fox took his post as agent for the New Zealand Company at Nelson. He was a man of action as well as an administrator and took to exploring. Charles Heaphy, the same age as Brunner was another of his companions, as was seen in the previous chapter. Thus in February 1846 Brunner, Heaphy, Fox and a Maori guide, Ekehu, reached the head of the Buller River from Lakes Rotoiti and Rotoroa and the Tiraumea River. In a dangerous river ford Fox was washed off his feet, but kept his head and his swag to swim ashore intact. After their return to Nelson in March, Fox persuaded his companions to continue exploring by travelling from the West Wanganui along the coastline to the country below the Grey River. As related previously, the going was anything but simple.

An account of the swagging included: "the appearance of one of the party, with his immense burden, forcibly reminded me of a grotesque Atlas; while another, with his small body and topping load, suggested the idea of an overgrown and peripatetic mushroom; any allusion to amateur ticket porters would at the time have been considered personal and met with adequate resentment", but when Heaphy described Ekehu he became less stilted and his pen portrait of a great Maori must here be quoted. "E Kehu, our guide," he wrote, "is thus a perfect bushman and is of very great service on an expedition: he has none of the sluggishness of disposition so common to the Maori, but is active and energetic, displaying far more of the characteristics of the Indian savage than are to be seen in the usual lazy inhabitants of a pa; thoroughly acquainted with the 'bush', he appears to have an instinctive sense, beyond our comprehension . . . a good shot . . . a capital manager of a canoe, a sure snarer of wild-fowl and a superb fellow at a ford is that same E Kehu; and he is worth his weight in tobacco."

Following the expedition with Heaphy and Ekehu along the West Coast to the Arahura and back, Brunner's next trip, and his greatest, was made without pakeha company, but with his faithful Ekehu.

Another Maori, Epikiwati, his wife and Ekehu's wife made up the rest of the party. Brunner allowed the wives to come on the expedition because they insisted. William Fox, no doubt with New Zealand Company funds, grub-staked Brunner for most of these costs: £8-0-6 for the Maoris, £8-14-0 for himself, and £20-3-10 for expedition provisions, firearms, tobacco, and equipment.

Thus for a total of £36-18-4 the greatest single journey in New Zealand exploration began. It was to last 550 days, and on 4 December 1846 Thomas Brunner made a rendezvous with his Maoris all of them of the Rangitane tribe who had at one time possessed the terrain to be covered by the explorer. For a while the travelling was not so bad, and at one stage a mule carried 150 lbs., while on another stage on Lake Rotoroa, a canoe helped. As the party kept their Christmas they heard a noise like a gun shot. It is possible that this was a distress signal from the schooner *Phoenix* which had left Nelson earlier in the month and which was never seen again. On Boxing Day

Brunner climbed a mountain of some 5,000 feet for a view to the east but found it blocked by snowy peaks. After spending some days collecting and drying fern-root, a staple item of diet, they began the tough going in the bush.

Progress down the Tiraumea branch of the Buller was varied by wet bush, heavy loads, floods and the contriving of shelters of manuka bark when the weather was too fierce. Brunner observed that wild dogs had exterminated kiwis and kakapos, the near-wingless ground birds. There was the diversion of a fight between the Maori wives, in which their husbands loyally took part, and Brunner added the task of peacemaker to his other obligations. He noted the use of a long pole to secure the party on a dangerous river crossing, with the strongest member facing the current. By 13 January 1847 they had reached a hut on the bank of the Buller, previously built by Ekehu. Two days later they crossed the river at the ford where Fox had nearly drowned. They had to make the ford naked, holding their swags and clothes high on their shoulders. Despite these precautions everything got wet. They caught grayling to add to their store of food of fern-root and cabbage-tree-root, baked in a Maori oven and the fish helped to make the sweet root palatable.

They had other chores to occupy wet days, such as making straps and baskets in which to carry the provisions. Presumably flax would have been used. By 25 January they had entered reaches of the Buller which had never before been trodden by a European. Brunner was rather dismayed to find that there were few birds in the black beech forest, for he had counted on them for supplementary rations.

At nights they made their bivouacs where they could. One night it was in a hole in the rocks, but as the river rose in a fresh, they were forced to move and build a shelter hut with bark. On the last day of the month they saw once more a peep of the sun. Early in February they returned up the valley to replenish their supplies of fern-root, and make a small raft. To cross the river it was necessary for two swimmers to tow a flax-line in front and for the other three to push the raft from behind. Back at the hole in the rocks and the shelter hut of bark they had further bad weather. When at last they got going down the valley on 22 February, Brunner described his huge



load as "a gun, seven pounds of shot, eight pounds of tobacco, two tomahawks, two pair of boots, five shirts, four pair of trowsers, a rug, and a blanket, besides at least thirty pounds of fern-root".

The total must have been near to a hundred pounds, or even more. It was no wonder that his back became sore.

The cliffs, the granite rocks and the freshes in the river made Brunner so depressed that he wrote that he would have returned, "were it not for the shame of the thing." Thick undergrowth and scrub added to his irritations. Matters were no better in March. The flour ran out, flood water made fishing impossible, birds continued to be scarce and small meals of fern-root twice a day were the diet. Brunner and Ekehu had to share the load of one of the wives, in addition to their own loads, and on country that he named the "worst walking" he had yet seen. Clouds of sandflies added further discomforts. He fell prey to a kind of influenza, which spread to the Maoris. On some days they could make no progress; on others they made short distances. It was on the 21 March that Brunner wrote his terse entry, "Rain continuing, dietary shorter, strength decreasing, spirits failing, prospects fearful." Yet there were occasional compensations, such as a few eels caught, or an edible fungus gathered. Brunner wrote of one improvised rock shelter "my bed-place fitted me something similar to a badly-made coffin, but harder and colder." By the end of the month the sugar and tea were exhausted, and Brunner felt he was fast losing his English diet, a notable understatement.

By April the effects of illness had worn off, and more eels were caught. Flax ropes were needed to secure men or women and loads as they climbed up and down granite rocks, with the river below. Wekas were snared for the pot, the walking became better, the Paparoa Range appeared on the horizon and life once again grew more tolerable. With a full belly, Brunner was able to consider the harmonious cries of wild birds. Later that month the travelling included level going as well as a variety of bird life, eels, a sole and a trout, but when the party had passed the Inangahua confluence they found themselves again at the foot of the rocky mountainous spurs that hemmed in the Buller gorges. In May hunger returned to the attack and at one time rats were the only food. Floods invaded one camp,



where the salt was destroyed. Another time they had had to perch up a tree till dawn.

They were in fact blocked by a cliff in the gorge till the rain and freshes eased. It was not till the 23 May that they passed this obstacle, an occasion made more than melancholy by Brunner agreeing to allow the Maoris to kill his dog Rover which tasted "something between mutton and pork". Thus Brunner gained the nick-name of *Kai Kuri*, the dog-eater. Rover's flesh lasted some four days. It has been said that the animal belonged to a friend of Brunner's, so regrets would have been doubled. By now Brunner was beyond the gorges, and the way to the sea was hindered not by cliffs but by thick bush and scrub, with supplejacks, lawyers, *kiekie* (the settlers' "giegies"), moss, rotten logs, and stagnant water. Brunner found that hunger made the Maoris irritable and lazy, but Ekehu remained loyal whatever the lamentations of the others. On the last day of the month, Brunner heard the roar of the tide, "to me as good as a dinner."

Four further days of struggle passed before they sighted the Maori pa at the mouth of the Buller. Brunner had counted on securing good provisions there, but the pa was empty, and the explorers had to be satisfied with seaweed instead of potatoes. Later they crossed the Buller in a canoe, and shared mussels and fern-root with some Maoris at another pa. On 15 June they added three Maoris to their party and headed southward, with cooked mussels and fern-root to sustain them in their hard climbing over ranges where the cliffs of the coast were too precipitous to be climbed. On 1 July they reached the Grey River, where many friendly Maoris gave them a feast of potatoes. After a week's spell, and with 27 Maoris they travelled to the Taramakau, where more potatoes, a view of snowy mountains and religious services were welcome indeed to weary men.

Brunner spent three months from 13 July in the district now known as Greymouth. His journal has interesting notes of Maoris customs, such as the preserving of birds in bags made from kelp, fishing for whitebait, potato planting, and cooking. He blamed wild dogs for the reduction of wekas, kakapos and kiwis.

For the journey further south, Brunner took local Maoris, leaving Ekehu and the others at the Grey. The way ahead was

a long one, impeded by soft sand and shingle, bold with headlands, sprawling with rain forest, mottled with swamps, and broken all too frequently with roaring rivers fed with melting snow and torrential rain. It was a journey that today would deter the most energetic of men, who would no doubt repair to a pub for a drink and a feed, and take a service car instead. For Brunner there was the attraction of the unknown horizon and the sun setting in the west, the breakers of the Tasman Sea and waving kelp, the barricade of snowy mountains and the mist turning to rain, sometimes shredding under the fierce contentment of sunshine.

By the end of October Brunner had crossed the Hokitika River in a canoe, accompanied his Maoris eel fishing, swum the Mikonui River, forded the Waitaha River chin-deep, gathered potatoes at the mouth of the Wanganui, noted the wreck of a sealing boat near Whataroa, begun to wear his third new shirt, and reached Okarito. He wrote: "I believe I have now acquired the two greatest requisites for bushmen in New Zealand, *viz.*, the capability of walking barefoot, and the proper method of cooking and eating fern-root . . . now I can trudge along merrily barefoot, or with a pair of native sandals . . . made of the leaves of flax. . . ."

November events were comparable: fording the Waiho at the risk of their lives, rafting over the Waikupakupa, and the Cook River, and being welcomed at Paringa with fern-root, preserved wekas and fish. He gave the Westland Maori population, north of latitude 44 degrees, as only 97 persons, of whom 68 were Wesleyans and 29 Church of England. On 19 November and at Tititira Head, near Paringa, he suffered a crushed foot and strained ankle when he was washed from a rock by a wave. He crawled back to Paringa, lay up, dressed the scratches with weka oil, and allowed two of the Maoris to return north without him. Thus he was forced to make Tititira his farthest south, as he wished to return up the Grey River.

To rejoin his Maoris and "to endeavour once more to see the face of a white man and hear my native tongue", he left Paringa on 11 December, and reached the Grey in time for four religious services and much feasting on Christmas Day. He found December "a glorious month of dietary" with fresh bush fruit, flax honey, plenty of fish, and, unfortunately so many

sandflies that meals were eaten with smoky fires as protection. He had to wait for a month as Ekehu was fishing in the north, but the time passed with preparations for the return journey.

On 26 January 1848 Brunner and 20 Maoris started up the Grey River in four canoes, complete with gear, provisions and fishing nets. By this time his tobacco had run out. He noted a coal seam up the river, whose fields were since named after him. The following day he noted the place where Ekehu had lost his father and had himself been taken prisoner by the Ngaitahu. On 29 January he visited the Maoris' Lake Moana, now known as Lake Brunner. The Maoris told him of the pass to Canterbury from the head of the nearby Taramakau valley.

The Grey Maoris left Brunner and his party, except for one man who remained as a guide. Canoes made light of the Grey River crossing. Brunner donned his fourth pair of trousers. On 18 February they left the main stream of the Grey. He must have been feeling fit and well-fed for he wrote appreciating the beautiful scenery. The days passed with fair progress, sometimes resting and smoking dried eels. From a low saddle between the Grey and the Inangahua he climbed a peak probably on the Victoria Range, near Reefton, from which he glimpsed tussock ranges beyond the Lewis Pass. He wished to take that route to Canterbury but his Maoris were determined to return to Nelson. If Brunner had gained his point he would have been spared his subsequent privations in the Buller. Regretfully he accompanied his Maoris down to the Buller, reached on 23 March.

April was a month of hardship, rain, wind, and an illness that gave Brunner temporary paralysis of one side of his body. Ekehu faithfully tended him, took his load, gave him strength, and encouraged him to endure further periods of near starvation. By 1 May they were back at the Matakitaki, with new snow and floods to emphasise that winter had returned. One night Brunner lost his sketches and other valuables when a basket fell on his fire. It was a relief to reach Lake Rotoroa on 5 June. Ten days later Brunner's trials were at last over, with a welcome and a taste of tobacco from a runholder at the Motueka. "So, thank God," wrote Brunner, "I am once more among civilised men." His journal ends with a grateful reference to Ekehu, "a faithful and attached servant", to whom he owed his life.



Brunner made other explorations for Nelson, but none of his subsequent journeys could be compared to his great effort of 550 days. He visited Canterbury in August 1849 with a letter of introduction from F. D. Bell, Fox's successor in Nelson, "Thomas Brunner, who has earned a name for adventurous and intrepid explorings of unknown country on the West Coast" but the best he could get was a job in charge of the Canterbury Association's stores at Lyttelton, which he left in January 1850. The Canterbury surveyor, Charles Torlesse, wrote in his diary on 31 January of "Brunner's having been lost for three or four days within 10 miles of Deans's." This would have been near Riccarton.

Whatever the circumstances of the appointment, and these are unknown, Brunner returned to Nelson as chief surveyor for the Nelson Provincial Government and commissioner of Public Works. In 1862 he again visited his old stamping ground at the Buller and the Grey by sea and cut survey lines for the future towns of Westport and Greymouth.

Publication of Brunner's journal in newspapers, in pamphlet form, and in the *Journal* of the Royal Geographical Society gave his travels wide and lasting recognition but it was not till it was printed as a bound book, *The Great Journey*, in 1952\* that it was available for modern bookshelves. Today aircraft fly on routine timetables above the ranges, valleys and coast-lines traversed by Brunner, miners work the Brunner coalfields, a railway runs down the Lower Buller gorges and past the shore of Lake Brunner, and uranium has been found on the banks of the Buller. Brunner died in 1874, his memory imperishably recorded by his deeds and his writing. He gave tradition to a young country, modesty as a monument to his successors, and an honoured name to those who reflect on achievements of enterprise and courage.

Simple verses I wrote for the *School Journal* in 1956 state my personal reverence for this explorer:

#### *Bushman*

Brunner the bushman, the surveyor, the dog-eater,  
The young chap who fed himself off the land,

\* Published by the Pegasus Press, and edited by John Pascoe; an appropriate tribute to a pioneer; now out of print.



Friend of Ekehu, hunter of birds,  
Eels, and the fern-root that grew in the rain.

"Food is short, and the travel is fearful,"  
Were entries in diaries from ranges to sea.  
Tough were the men, and tough was the fern-root,  
High were the mountains, and free were the seals.

Revolt from the ease of a safe, snug bed,  
Escape to the struggle with river and scrub,  
To blankets of storm over unmapped skylines,  
To hints of sunshine and promise of floods.

"Thank God, I am once more among civilised men."  
Thus ended his journey, his doubts, and his fears.  
Pakeha Brunner and Maori Ekehu  
Made travels exploring the rivers and bush.

As contrast to Brunner's experiences in 1847-48, consider those of some young Canterbury mountaineers a hundred and ten years later. Eleven life-jacketed men alternated crews in rubber dinghys and between them paddled, canoed, and shot down 128 miles of river from Lake Rotoiti to Westport in a long Easter week-end. The shades of Ekehu would have gone sadly in search of wekas as the new crafts bound for the sea bounced and twisted past fierce rapids.

Alan Foot and his friends had proved their techniques in the Hurunui and some Canterbury glacier-fed rivers before they tackled the Buller. The trip began by truck from Christchurch, crossed the Lewis Pass by transalpine road, and turned up the Buller while the crews peered at the rapids they were soon to meet in the raw. At Lake Rotoiti the three rubber dinghys left calm waters for the turbulence ahead. By the time eight men had swept along their first nine miles the other three had made a camp and a meal at the Howard junction.

A good frost the following morning; the same eight men shivered on their dinghys and into the river where they took two hours to reach a hotel at the Owen River where the crews changed. Strong paddling took them past rocks and whirlpools in several rapids and a camera from one bank recorded

their determination. A group of people watched them bounce off one bluff as they were swept down to further rapids. It must have been exciting work, and faster than flax *mokihis* propelled by Maori swimmers and their wives. That night they made a good landing-place and returned to Murchison and shelter; no bark huts or dripping rocks for them. The account of the start of the trip the next day was graphic: "... the dinghys crashed through the pounding waves. Shooting down like a rocket the crew paddled as though possessed, wave after wave crashed over them as they battled through the last of the whitecaps to break out into a dark green stretch of still waters." One may assume that they had enjoyed a breakfast more substantial than fern-root or roasted birds. As crews changed near a hotel on the route, there was the odd drink of beer to warm their cockles.

Down by the Lyell reach of the river a struggling body was seen to be floating down the river, with another man hanging to an upset dinghy and yet another man underneath it. The crew righted the dinghy and floated down to the Inangahua Junction. Another change of crews was made as far as Berlins, where the night was spent. The last day of the trip saw frequent changes of crew as the gorges were left behind. At noon Westport was reached and the river voyage was over. West Coast hospitality preceded the drive back to Christchurch.

What a difference from Brunner's diary entry of 4 June 1847 when he reached Westport: "During the night the rats stole the provisions designed for our breakfast, so we had to start without one. . . . Fired a salute of powder, but received no answer, so we pushed on, and by night reached our old quarters, where I once before had slept on my trip with Mr. Heaphy down the coast."

In following Brunner's explorations, the young men of the dinghys had themselves found adventures in keeping with the needs of their generation.

*Edwin Dashwood and William Mitchell  
of the Acheron*

OF ALL THE COUNTRY described in these pages, Marlborough was perhaps the easiest for travellers. Its tawny valleys were suitable pastures for sheep and cattle. Its mountains were high and rocky but were not glacier-flanked, though hostage to winter snows for several months of the year; lower ranges might feel only a sniff of snow on frosty mornings. Sunshine was generous, and much of the land fertile. The greatest danger for explorers was in the rivers; the province of Marlborough had that much in common with its fellows. The relative scarcity of bush gave freedom to men and stock. River gorges were usually bypassable on high terraces. Marlborough was a gentleman's province, and many of its explorers were gentlemen or at least officers.

Not that Marlborough was a province in 1850 when the journey now to be discussed took place. Marlborough was then a vast appendage to Nelson; Canterbury was merely in the making. Men lived in Marlborough to increase their flocks and herds, unless they were shore whalers, scallywags or missionaries. Even the Maori population was not a considerable one. Although in 1850 Canterbury runholders had some need of new grazing land, they had plenty of country for immediate use. Marlborough pastoralists, on the other hand, had need both of new country and of a practicable stock route to a market. While Canterbury men had little cause to travel north, Marlborough men had good reason to travel south.

The three great rivers of Marlborough, the Wairau, the Awatere and the Clarence began from humble rivulets mewling from springs in shingle, were nourished by winter snow and sizeable tributaries rushing willy-nilly from unexpected points of the compass, and mating with the undertow and breakers with a thrust of watermass that in floods discoloured the South Pacific for miles from shore. Even as early as 1848 the Nelson



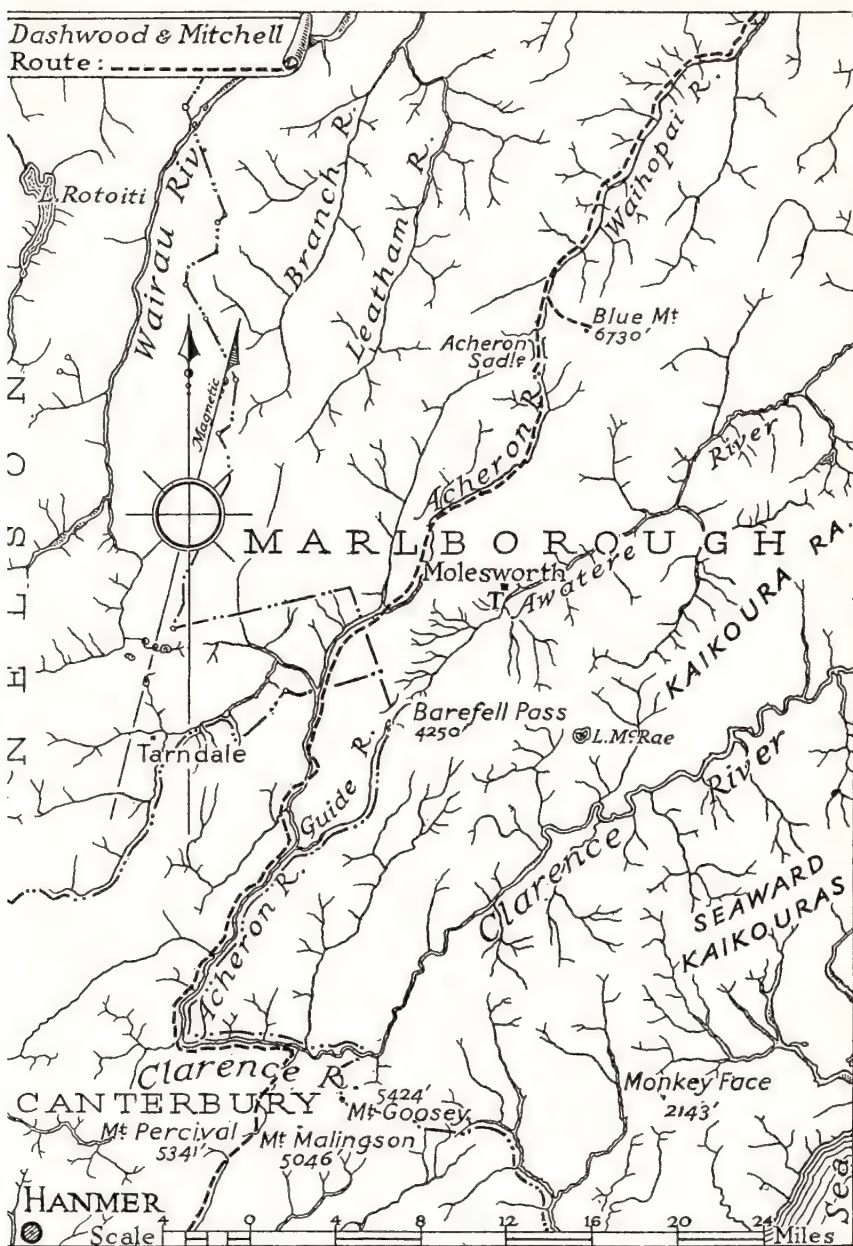
Provincial Government was keen to provide an overland route from the Wairau to Lyttelton, then known as Port Cooper. Had not Thomas Brunner of Westland fame been ill he would have tried to discover such a route. And how much easier his journey would have been than the gorges of the Buller or the coastline below Okarito.

Lack of official persistence did not deter the squatters from doing their own pioneering for self-reliance was a characteristic of such men enterprising enough to run stock in a land bare of roads and regular communications. There was no central authority either to kick parties into the field or to correlate their efforts once begun. The individuals were as rugged as the sky-lines they sought to get behind. The first to break through the natural barriers to Canterbury were the Captains Edwin H. Dashwood and W. M. Mitchell, with an old whaler, Harris, as their servant. Dashwood was a settler, an important figure in his district. Mitchell had served in India with the 84th Regiment and had visited New Zealand in 1848 when he had journeyed from Auckland to Wellington. He returned to England the following year, but again came to New Zealand in 1850.

Mitchell was on sick leave, but whatever disability followed his illness does not seem to have curbed his dash in Marlborough. Lady Godley, whose assessment of men was skilfully critical, found him "very lively, and evidently much used to society . . . a good deal more gentlemanlike than the *general run* of young gentlemen who have hitherto wished to settle . . .". Mitchell had told the good lady that having spent eight years in Calcutta he had broken most of his ties with his home country in England.

In April 1850, when the expedition was ready, the *Nelson Examiner* stated that in its view it was most important that a good route should be discovered from the Wairau to Canterbury, for the country to the south of its boundaries would then be open to Nelson. If the older province carried too many flocks and the newcomer too few, a feasible inland trail would adjust the balances.

Another man who had set out to find such a route was Lieutenant A. Impey of the Bengal Engineers. With a sheepman, a whaler and two Maoris he went up the Awatere, but, beset by illness, rain and early snows, his party retired from a singularly



unsuccessful campaign. Dashwood, Mitchell and Harris were successful. The substance of the following account was given by Captain Mitchell on his return to Wellington in June. He prefaced it by explaining that a prior trip to the Waiopi (Waihopai) branch of the Wairau had included the ascent of "a mountain to which I have heard a very sanguinary appellation given, but which I propose to call Mount Shepherd". From this top he saw the head of the Awatere Valley running parallel with the Inland Kaikouras. It is possible that this mountain is now mapped as Blue Mountain, 6,730 feet.

The main expedition in April was served by a mare and a mule each carrying over 200 lbs. in weight. The first 30 miles was easy going. For some reason, possibly to avoid a gorge, the men coaxed their animals up, over and along a feature they called Starvation Hill. This must have been near the Acheron Saddle, 5,140 feet. They saw a pyramid-shaped peak they named "Mount Impey" after their fellow-explorer and Mitchell wondered ingenuously, whether it was an active volcano, for he had previously seen it when its now bare slopes held snow. It is a pity that the present Mount Impey is not the same peak.

When the pack-train descended to another valley it was to find rocks, speargrass (the "Spaniard" of the settler, *taramea* of the Maori and *aciphylla* of the botanist), and ubiquitous matagouri, which, from its contorted shapes and bristles was well known as "Wild Irishman". There was no fern or bush, so the matagouri made welcome firewood. Mitchell thought that the valley had never been burnt in contrast with others that settlers had fired. He was right. The way ahead was untraversed. By now it was winter, and Mitchell found one frost made him colder than he had ever been in England. No doubt the change from the Indian climate had affected his judgment as well as his temperature. He wrote that icicles covered the rocks and the banks of the Waihopai, and that clothes, once removed, froze in two minutes.

The explorers named this valley after H.M.S. *Acheron* whose commander, Captain J. L. Stokes, was at that time charting the coastline with great accuracy. As they descended the river, an increasing number of tributaries added to the power of the main stream, the valley walls narrowed, and fords were difficult and





#### WEST COAST EXPLORATION

These historic sketches were also drawn by Heaphy in 1846. The one above shows the view from the Maori pa at the mouth of the Arahura River, with Mount Cook, the "Te Hauraki" (Aorangi) of the explorers. The Maori village at the Arahura (or "Tara Makau"? ) is also sketched.

The sketch below is no less significant, with the only known portrait of that magnificent Maori guide and forager, Ekehu, snaring a weka at the Arahura, with lofty Mount Cook on the horizon.





#### RIVER REACHES AND COASTLINE

These modern photographs of the Buller Valley and the West Coast hint at the variety of obstacles surmounted by the resolute Thomas Brunner on his great journey of 550 days.



dangerous. There was no contour route to be made higher up the sides of the valley, and most of the flats, choked with speargrass and matagouri, were impenetrable until they had been fired. The party had to wade along the bank of the river; the mule slipped and their stock of biscuits were ruined. They named the gorge the "Devil's Grip", and wished it had been dry enough to have burnt the vegetation that had so impeded them.

After five miles of what Mitchell described as "amphibious travelling", he "clambered a hill" with Dashwood, and saw the head of the Awatere Valley, in the country now known as Molesworth. He named this valley Richmond, after the Superintendent of Nelson to whom his report was later addressed, but the name was transferred by the map-makers to "Richmond Dale" at the forks of the Saxton and Acheron Rivers. Mitchell was very impressed with his Richmond Valley, and called it "the very picture of a perfect sheep grazing country". He also wrote: "And it is my firm belief, that ere long the great south road will traverse Richmond Valley." Dashwood thought the valley was the Maoris' "Kaiparategau". Mitchell's topographical instinct, even his training, was strong enough for him to identify correctly the valley as the head of the one he had seen from Mount Shepherd. He also pointed out that a road taken up the Awatere would avoid all the bad going of his Waihopai route, such as Starvation Hill, the Devil's Grip and "our enemies, the prickles".

Although the valley had opened below the gorge to a clearing, the "well-armed vegetable opponents" again forced the travellers to the river, and on 3 May they made an unsuccessful attempt to burn. The weather was too wet. The following day Mitchell and Harris returned up valley after their horse and mule which had broken camp, while Dashwood climbed to the west and reported the existence of another valley, probably that of the Severn. By now the Acheron River was large, and as the party discussed one ford, the horse and mule dashed across without them. The party had to follow the river down before they could find a safe foot ford and catch up with the animals.

Mitchell noted that the district would be worth exploring for three months as the ranges were easily to be climbed. One can assume that he meant exploring for grazing land. He thought the land better for cattle than for sheep, because of the speargrass



and other prickles. Scientists who study soil erosion are now convinced that cattle do less harm to the land than sheep, so it is interesting to hear of Mitchell's conclusion based on entirely different premises.

Dashwood and Harris had again to chase the animals on 8 May when they had strayed to the far bank of the river. Mitchell climbed a mountain but fog and clouds prevented him from seeing any distance. He described the top as "a bed of small broken stones put on a recently finished Macadamised road". This would have been to a musterer the usual pile of shingle (scree) found in the ranges of Marlborough and Canterbury. He reported that the shrubs were aniseed, wild geranium, and parsley; the ducks were black and blue, and that the presence of wekas, cranes, paradise geese (sic), quails, grasshoppers, and flies "seemed to denote improving country, and to hint that we were nearing the coast". He lamented that the party had no gun, yet they never went short of wekas, as the dog caught more than they could eat.

They discovered signs of Maori travel on 9 May. Firewood and a whare (hut) remains showed that Maoris had camped in the valley near a point close to the Clarence confluence. Snow covered the ranges on either side of the valley. Mitchell described the Acheron as turning to the east, while a large tributary came from the west. In fact this tributary, which he named the Poynter, was the main Clarence, of which the Acheron was a feeder. Travelling in the Clarence was good as the vegetation had been fired, probably by Maoris heading for the coast. When fording the river, Mitchell lost his compass, the only one with the party.

Further down the Clarence, Dashwood and Mitchell climbed a top to survey the next stages of their tortuous journey. They saw the coastline to Banks Peninsula, and the low hills near Cape Campbell. With these bearings they could have confidence in their progress and in the knowledge that they were nearing the Canterbury Plains. They decided to leave the Clarence, to which Mitchell referred as "the Waipapa, or Big River of the whalers", and to follow a small branch now mapped as the Hossack River. They called its course the "Valley of Hope". It was clever work thus to avoid the gorge of the Clarence below the Hossack junction. They had to cross between two peaks of

over 5,000 feet, and gain the headwaters of the Hanmer River, with its black beech forest. Fortunately this offered no serious obstacle to the horse and mule. After some 11 miles they entered a plain they named after W. J. W. Hamilton, a draughtsman and explorer with H.M.S. *Acheron*, who helped Mitchell with his report and map when he returned to civilisation. Today this is known as the Hanmer Plains. The covering was good grass, fern, manuka, and a swamp.

By now the party was only a few miles south of the hot springs at Hanmer; how they would have enjoyed a bathe in those healing waters. They gained the "Waihou" (Waiau-ua) River, and in fording its seven streams Mitchell had this narrow escape: "on nearing the shore, the last channel became suddenly deep. Taken by surprise I was carried off my legs, and immersed; but scrambling, came up again, and perceived a trusty stick held out to me. Seizing it, I was dragged on shore by the same hand and the same stick that had once before done me the same good service—those of my friend Dashwood." He was not the first explorer to have been saved by the quick reactions of a friend on a river bank. Had he drowned, it would have been said that he had died "the New Zealand death".

Three days of fog gave them little view, but their route through a gorge of the Waiau, today flanked on its west by a main highway, was in what Mitchell called "a sweet pretty valley" with luxuriant flax and scrub. A good surprise awaited them below the gorge. "Issuing from the valley," wrote Mitchell, "we burst upon the finest grazing plain I have ever seen in this or any other country. I know it is the fate of travellers to be accused of exaggeration; but I care not, as long as I call attention to the splendid inland plains." He further described this farm country near Culverden, as a bowl of 200,000 acres or more, bounded by the Waiau and Hurunui Rivers, with fine grass and soil fit for cultivation, well drained, and without swamps.

Although there was a good route from this plain to the Canterbury Plains, the explorers chose to head for the coast, because they had little food left, no compass, and the weather was bad. Accordingly they went down the Waiau River, bypassed a lower gorge, and crossed some hills covered with fern, flax, toi-toi and manuka. On 23 May they reached the coast near Cheviot, walked south above cliffs and the sea, and saw a fire

ahead. They lit a fire in reply. That evening they were welcomed by Mr. Caverhill of Motanau, a restless settler who had previously that year explored some of the country between his run and the Clarence. Caverhill took them across the Hurunui to his homestead and gave them food, rest, clothes and money. The gap between north and south had been bridged. It was fitting that they received hospitality from a kindred spirit.

Dashwood and Mitchell left Harris with Caverhill and set off for Lyttelton. Their troubles were not over. They lost their way on the plains, floundered through swamps in a snowstorm, left their horses, and struggled to Kaiapoi. As they tramped to Lyttelton they were much impressed with the possibilities of Canterbury and the work already done by its settlers.

Mitchell finished his report with an expression of regret that the loss of a compass, the short daylight, and the bad weather over six weeks had prevented the presentation of more detailed information. He also explained that he had omitted "all adventures merely personal", and promised that with Hamilton's help he would make a map. This was traced in recent years in the records of the Hydrographic Office, London.

While Mitchell had only made passing references to personal aspects of his journey, it was not correct that he had omitted all of them. It is a pity that Lady Godley did not elaborate fully when within a month of Mitchell's return she wrote: "He (Mitchell) gave us really a very interesting account of his journey, in which he had a good many difficulties, and nearly ran short of food, being reduced at last to *very* mouldy biscuit, which was wetted and spoiled in crossing one of the rivers, and an occasional bird shot." Yet how enlivening could have been a personal diary noting, as did Brunner's, changes of mood, incidents of travel, and all the *trivia* of new experiences. What was routine for Mitchell would have been fascinating for the student a hundred years later.

Lady Godley also wrote that Mitchell was obliged to return to India, where he was always ill, but that he hoped to come back to settle in Canterbury after a year. Mitchell must have been determined, because he took up a run at Mount Grey and left it in charge of a manager and several hands. An account of Edward Ward refers to Mitchell's station as being "planted in rather a picturesque, though rather a dreary position, just



under the foot of Mount Grey, in a valley by the side of what is a full river in winter time. It consists of one slab house merely, but it was refreshing to see any sign of life at all after the weary lifelessness of the great plain." Even more interesting is Ward's mention of Caverhill as "a real specimen of a bushman—an old Sydney 'Overlander', considered the best in this part of the country, formerly a herdsman only, but now the owner of sheep, cattle and horses at a place called Muttonhou (Motanau). . . . His conversation was very amusing and very shrewd." Fate was against Mitchell; he was not to enjoy life as a settler in Canterbury. He died in India at the end of 1851, only eighteen months after his New Zealand journey.

Dashwood applied in 1852 for pastoral licences of the country between the Waiau and the Hurunui, "the splendid inland plains" of Mitchell's report, and was granted these rights, but he did not stock the runs and in 1853 transferred his interests to Henry Young whom he met in Sydney and E. C. Minchin.

The value of the route proved by Dashwood and Mitchell south from the Wairau was not great in itself. But their example encouraged other men to improve on the bad sections. Later in 1850 F. A. Weld used the Barefell Pass at the head of the Awatere to get into the Acheron valley by the Guide River. He was young and hasty, took topography for granted, and was convinced that he had reached coo-ee of the Waiau, when he was still in the Clarence watershed. This was a costly error because he instructed a brother of his partner and three musterers to take some 700 sheep to Canterbury. The enterprise failed and the flocks were abandoned. The next time Weld and his partner sent sheep south it was by the coastline.

Another character brought the affair back into perspective. E. J. Lee was adept in both exploring and droving. He crossed Barefell Pass on Christmas Day 1851, rode through the river flats and over the ranges from the Clarence to the Hanmer, and made a direct line out to Rangiora. Satisfied that the route was a good one, he teamed up with Edward Jollie and took 1,800 sheep from the Awatere to Cheviot. Jollie's experience as surveyor enabled him to pick a better route between the Clarence and Hanmer than those previously taken. This "Jollies Pass" is a very important link between two large pastoral districts.

Still more variations were made; the Wairau and the Awatere were changed for Tarndale and the Upper Clarence. The enterprises of Dashwood and Mitchell, however deficient in detailed maps\* in themselves, were the catalysts that changed the courses of squatting and runholding in North Canterbury. That these men could climb a hill when valley directions were doubtful was but to emphasise that by New Zealand standards the country was not tough, however thorny the path. That they did climb hills and cross their ranges when they could have been playing the gallant in Wellington entitles them to full credit as explorers of Marlborough. It was their misfortune that they made their expedition under winter conditions. A departure two months earlier would have given them an agreeably sunny trip, through what a recent historian has described as the "clear atmosphere and muscular outlines" of the Amuri high country. Today the occasional cattleman, musterer or deer-killer travels in the steps of Dashwood and Mitchell.† Gone are the thickets of briars and scrub. Supplies can be air-dropped for isolated stations, and part of the Clarence is now traversed by a high power transmission line, with a jeep trail for its linesmen.

\* Mitchell's account was reprinted in the *Journal* of the Royal Geographical Society in 1851, and with a small scale map, took its place as period piece.

† Mitchell's name is not found on today's maps but Dashwood has a pass named after him south of Blenheim on the main highway.

## *Leonard Harper of the Taramakau*

THE FIRST CROSSING of the Southern Alps from Canterbury to Westland was made in 1857 by Leonard Harper, a young man in his early twenties. He did not overstate its value, and was known to have called it a boyish adventure. The routine adventure of one era can become the epic of another. Today Harper's trip is rated highly, for it opened the way for thousands of diggers in the gold rushes of the sixties. He might never even have recorded his experiences, had not his son, Arthur P. Harper, an exploring mountaineer of the nineties, persuaded him to make notes and give details.

The name of Harper is important in Canterbury history. Leonard's father was the first Bishop of Canterbury, who organised his diocese on horseback from Christchurch to Southland. He had left the Old Country when he was 52 and had a family of nine sons and six daughters. On arrival in New Zealand in 1856 he found that there were only five churches in the province, and that to know his flock of over 6,000 people, he had to roam across wide plains, rivers, and mountain valleys. Like Saint Paul he was sometimes "in peril of waters . . . in perils in the wilderness". His adventures on Banks Peninsula included saving a building from a bush fire near Akaroa, and he experienced the rigours of winter snow.

Bishop Harper's ability to manage pack-horses and to cope with dangerous river fords must have given him some satisfaction. His son Leonard, too, must have responded to the call to wander, if not in his father's footsteps, then in country where no white men had preceded him. Where the father became used to beds of tarpaulin or wool, and musterers' bunks, the son had in store a succession of river boulders and ferns, sandy beaches and Maori mats. It is not known whether either was familiar with the long journeys made by Thomas Brunner in the late forties, but it was likely that they knew that the West Coast itself had been traversed from the mouth of the Buller to Paringa.



The urge to take a more direct route may have given Leonard Harper an excuse to resolve his restlessness into action. Thoughts of gold may also have stirred him for there *had* been discoveries in Nelson and the Coromandel.

On one visit to the Maoris at Kaiapohia (now Kaiapoi), young Leonard heard a chief tell his father that there was a pass across the ranges to the West Coast. The chief said that some Maoris had fled up the Hurunui after the warrior Te Rauparaha had made his celebrated raid. Under promise of secrecy, Leonard prepared for an expedition across the pass. Ihaia Tainui, the son of the chief, and two other Maoris would accompany him. The chief was not easily persuaded in this matter, as he feared that the pakehas would interfere with the greenstone country of the Maori people. With Leonard there also travelled a Mr. Locke.

In the meantime other settlers must have heard about the existence of the pass. Edward Dobson, Provincial Engineer, and Mason and Taylor, sheep-run holders, were active travellers by September 1857. "A Maori path", noted an editorial in the *Lyttelton Times*, "has been known to exist from the east to the West Coast by gorges of the Hurunui . . . a certain precipitous gully in the gorge has been the obstacle to exploring parties." The report then described how these pioneers crossed a low saddle from the head of the Hurunui to a stream flowing westward. Because of bad weather the party returned to Canterbury. Two other men visited the pass, but they also did not venture through to the West Coast. One may assume that the prospect of thick jungle and swift rivers without hope of good grazing land made them chary of enterprise beyond the main range itself.

At the end of October, Leonard Harper, Locke and three Maoris began their long trip away from Christchurch and civilisation. They were able to ride or lead their horses along a good track, which passed through Maori Gully, along the south bank of the Hurunui until they reached Loch Katrine, a small lake connected by a stream with Lake Sumner. There they found an old water-logged canoe in which they placed their swags and then walked along the western side of the lake, towing the canoe to its head, with the night noises of wekas, kiwis and moreporks to give an edge to their dreams.

Lake Sumner is a beautiful place in November. The snow has not left the high basins of the ranges. Gaunt rocks contrast with the white dazzle of the snow away up high. Closer at hand the proud beech forest comes down to the deep blue lake. Beyond the lake and its green background the river flats of the Hurunui are wide, golden and grassy. Tussocks sway to the wind. As the day grows older a haze spreads down the valley and softens the mountain outlines, till they sharpen as the last sunlight leaves them to the distance of the twilight.

The lake became lost to view as the party rode up the Hurunui Valley and the bush advanced to meet the river, and the strangers. As the men made progress up grass flats, past hot sulphur springs, and with odd deviations in the bush, the valley grew narrower until it was reduced to the confines of riverbed, boulders and rushing water. By now the going was too rough for horses, so they were turned loose, gear was stowed under rocks, and swags distributed among Maori and pakeha. For two days bad weather delayed advance, and the party stayed in camp. When they made another start it was to follow the riverbed to avoid the thick bush. In those days there were neither deer tracks nor tramping trails to make quick work of bush walking. A steady climb took them to a mossy swamp covered with melting snow. This was the No-Man's-Land on the crest of the Main Divide itself. A 100 yards further and tough sub-alpine scrub covered spurs falling to Westland. They had crossed their pass, henceforward to be mapped as "Harper".

Snow still lay in the scrub. The explorers sidled around rough country, with the vegetation changing to rain forest. They reached a lusty young stream, the head of the Taramakau River, their chosen route down to the West Coast. From this point Harper and Locke were the first white men to brave the fords of a river that has since claimed many lives. Their problems were however nothing like as arduous as those faced by Thomas Brunner and his Maori guides in the Buller gorges some 10 years before.

After six miles, the Upper Taramakau boulder beaches became wider and there was often good travelling on flats. When heavy rain fell, wet days were spent in camp, no doubt in shelters improvised by the resourceful Maoris. There was no sense in tackling river fords when they were discoloured in

flood, and boulders were rumbling grimly to the sea. There were other times that it was feasible to bypass a bad ford by struggling through the bush close to the river. Snowy mountains looked down on them when the weather cleared and the stars shone bravely. Dry windfalls made good fuel for fires. Life must have been sweet for the young men, and each new horizon one to arouse awe or excitement.

After some days they crossed a deep and rapid tributary, the Otira. At this point the Taramakau Valley is wide and the river full-throated. Mount Alexander guards the view, but there is promise of low country beyond its spurs. Harper looked up the Otira with some interest; his Maori guides told him that there was a pass at the head of that tributary, and that it led to comparatively open country on the Canterbury side. The pass was the future Arthur's Pass, but Harper was not destined to cross it, because of a combination of bad weather, lack of food and boots.

As the party followed down the Taramakau, Harper noticed a grass flat. He made a side trip along a Maori track and glimpsed the deep mountain lake gained by Brunner and named after him from the Grey River approach in January 1848. Returning to the Taramakau, Harper found after a few miles that the river was too deep to be forded by men on foot. Every so often it ran against high bluffs, covered with thick scrub and bush. The thought of having to climb these bluffs and sidle through the undergrowth was not an enticing one. All hands collected flax sticks to make a raft, the Maori mokihi or moki, on which they could float where they could not ford and did not wish to swim. The river rose overnight with heavy rain, and when morning came the men found themselves on a dismal island between torrents of rushing flood water.

At first the Maoris refused to commit themselves to the flax raft, but there was no choice. In company with trees and snags torn away by the flood, the party was whirled madly down the current, and landed, not altogether with their consent, on another island, on which some scrub grew. They made a forced camp. Fortunately the river fell during the night, and on the following morning they continued the journey.

After more river work, the raftsmen floated down through a gorge where the bush overhung the fringe of the river. Then



came the sight of sandhills, and the sound of the sea roaring its welcome at the bar by the river mouth. There was a Maori pa at the sandhills, where Tainui's brother, Tarapuhi, received them. Harper presented a letter from the father of Tainui and Tarapuhi, and sealed his good reception with a gift to Tarapuhi of a clay pipe and a waistcoat. The journey from the last sheep station Harper had passed in the Hurunui had taken 23 days, with a diet of birds and eels supplemented by damp tea and sugar. The tobacco supply had not been spoiled.

Tarapuhi guided Harper to another Maori pa at the mouth of the Grey River, where he was impressed by the possibilities of a port. When he returned to the Taramakau, Harper realised that Locke could not travel further, because he had severe trouble with his feet, and would need a long rest. Locke's boots had not been as satisfactory in Harper's opinion as Maori sandals made from flax.

While Locke remained at the Taramakau pa, Tarapuhi and Harper followed Brunner's trail along the coastline to the south. It is not clear whether Harper passed Brunner's furthest south, at Titira Head. One account claims that Harper travelled well beyond the Haast and Jackson's Bay, to the North Point of Big Bay; a distance said to be 180 miles south of the Grey River. The most tangible clue is that Harper met the "Waitangi" Maoris and did part of the journey with them. If Waitangi = the Haast there would be little doubt that Harper had indeed tramped past Jackson's Bay, but it is more likely that "Waitangi" was the river near Okarito, which would make his coastal trip less than Brunner's. Whatever the answer to this problem it seems that Harper, as Brunner did, lived off the land, or rather the coast, with a diet of shellfish, birds and eggs. River crossing was a never-ending hazard, and much of the going was hard work.

When Harper had rejoined Locke, who presumably had recovered, he found that two of his party of Maoris had decided to stay on the West Coast. Tarapuhi offered to take the pakehas back to Canterbury. They poled canoes up the Taramakau for 20 miles, dug a supply of fern-root, and made good progress. Snow bailed them up on Harper Pass for some 24 hours. Their condition without good food, and practically without warm clothes was somewhat miserable. Down at Lake Sumner

they found some sheep grazing. These had been taken there by Taylor, the runholder, and the fresh meat tasted well. The ragged remains of some blankets were their only swags and Harper's clothing was half a shirt, worn as an apron. Taylor gave him a pair of trousers.

After an absence of three months Harper returned to Christchurch. He gave a gross of clay pipes to Tarapuhi, who carried them back to Westland in a sugar sack.

This experience showed the endurance of a young Canterbury man. Once again it underlined the resource and ingenuity of the Maoris as travellers, who, without tents, could make breakwinds and shelters from bush and scrub. Harper brought back with him specimens of gold he had found at the mouths of the Taramakau and the Grey. According to his son, Arthur P. Harper, this discovery was not made known. Most valuable of all, the expedition had proved that pakehas could cross from Canterbury to Westland over the barrier of the Southern Alps. And although the route was too indirect to be used by road and railway, it saw countless adventures when a few years later established goldfields drew men to Westland.

Leonard Harper's father, the Bishop, crossed his son's pass when over 60 years of age. According to a letter from one of his relations he carried a miner's swag, slept sometimes in wet tents and lived on a fare of bacon and biscuits. Once his horse stumbled and fell on its side, but the Bishop was rescued from the mud by his companions. He made other trips across the pass to Westland. There was kindness and friendship on every trail to a man who was hungry, wet and cold.

Today the crossing of Harper Pass is regarded as a pleasant tramping excursion, with the only danger the fording of the Taramakau River. The track is well marked and there is a hut for each night of the journey. Perhaps no one on that trip will ever recapture the feelings of Leonard Harper when in 1857 he returned from his strenuous holiday. He told his son that he had wasted a lot of time in camps owing to bad weather and to the Maori habit of resting at any place where eels and birds were plentiful. Time, so spent, has become part of history; raw material for a raw young country.

Leonard Harper left New Zealand after his law practice failed following a charge of embezzlement. He died in the

Channel Islands. His son Arthur continued his tradition of exploring. Leonard's brother, George Harper, also adventured in the search for new passes, and drove sheep across Browning Pass to Hokitika, as related in Chapter 13 of this book.



*John Thomson of the Waitaki*

FOR THOSE WHO travel from Christchurch or Dunedin to Queenstown in a day surfeited with glimpses of grand mountains and lakes, extensive pastures and deep rivers, it is difficult to think what they would do first if they were put back a hundred years and asked to make a survey. John Turnbull Thomson, Northumbrian, born in 1821, an accomplished engineer and surveyor, had no doubts that such a task was difficult.

Thomson had spent many years in what were then called the Straits Settlements. As well as engineering and surveying, he took a great interest in the customs and languages of the Malay people which probably served him well when he needed the co-operation of Maori elders in the South Island. His health required a change from the tropics, and in the bracing climate of Southland and Otago he found fresh vigour; and as chief surveyor for Otago Province he found great scope for his talents.

A study of Thomson's original papers in the National Archives shows how seriously he took his work, and how necessary it was to precede detailed surveys with reconnaissance journeys. From his appointment in Otago in 1856 he must have revelled in the sun and open spaces after the steamy jungles of the Malay Peninsula. After establishing his office in Dunedin and travelling to the site of Invercargill, which he surveyed for settlement, he was ready for adventures in the interior.

His expedition began early in October when he visited Otago Peninsula and fixed the latitude of Mihiwaka, today a small railway station. Unsettled weather delayed him somewhat. On 14 October he left his headquarters in Dunedin with two pack-horses, tent, equipment and a month's provisions for his party of three men. After two weeks on the coast and Lower Waitaki Valley he travelled 70 miles inland "to view the features of the Upper Waitaki Country". This feat was necessary to enable

him to judge what arrangements were needed for the survey. On 9 November the party left Otepopo Downs, and crossed the Horse Range to the Shag River by a rugged and difficult route. Three days of broken and stormy weather were experienced on the way to the Taieri Lake and Upper Taieri Plains.

Thomson described these fine plains and their bold mountain boundaries and, after a visit to the lake, headed to the north-west. By the middle of November he had reached good grass country in the valley of the Ida, whence he reached the Manuherikia, a tributary of the Clutha River. He noted an opening in the snowy ranges to the west and thought it would be accessible for drays. He recognised the Eyre Valley and the Slate Range from a trip he had made the previous year. When he had completed his survey he turned east to cross the Taieri "swollen with the late rains and melting snow". This river was so rapid and turbid that, not knowing the nature of its bed, he thought it unsafe to ford. He turned northwards, re-entered the Shag and Waitaki districts and at the end of the month returned to Dunedin for a breather.

The bad weather experienced, the wet clothes, the river fording, the damp camps at night, and the presence of clouds on the mountain tops had all combined to slow down the survey work. "After toiling to the top of a hill," Thomson wrote: "I had often to watch for hours to get an observation, or had to return disappointed."

Back in Dunedin, Thomson found waiting a letter from Captain Cargill, Superintendent of Otago Province, asking the probable cost of a minute survey of all the pastoral runs. Thomson's reply was a classic for its force and pungency. He stated that as the pastoral area was some 15 million acres an actual survey, with details of all natural features, would need major and minor triangulations with the construction of permanent trig stations. Such a survey would also need chain or traverse work, entailing the cutting of lines through such obstacles as forests and scrub, as well as following the banks of all rivers and rivulets.

Thomson pointed out that in England, where the country was accessible, the cost of survey was reckoned at ninepence an acre. If the estimated cost of survey of Otago pastures was reduced with some optimism to threepence an acre, the total

expense to be borne by the Otago Provincial Government would be £187,500. He wrote that to make the survey his staff would take 40 years. The alternative would be to augment his staff 20 times and thus reduce the time necessary to accomplish the work to two years. He doubted that he had the strength to undertake the task. On the other hand, Thomson explained that if he made reconnaissance surveys of the 15 million acres he could finish it in a year at a cost of £1,500. He thought that his margin of error would be 20 to 40 acres in 1,000 acres and that this would be "a minuteness which I feel assured will satisfy all reasonable requirements of the Runholders . . .".

On 7 December Thomson again left Dunedin. This time settled weather was to make his trip a successful one. He rejoined his survey party at Otepopo, where five weeks' food was tied on the pack-horses. He led his men to "the Upper Waitaki Plains", probably past the small settlement we now know as Omarama, and to the Upper Ahuriri River, where "a pass into the Upper Clutha country was reported by the Maoris to exist". It is likely that Reko, a Southland Maori who had guided early pakeha parties, had passed on this information.

A narrow easy valley lay behind the initial gorge of the Ahuriri and led to a good camp site from which Thomson could climb a mountain and gain a view. He wanted to link his survey stations in North Otago with those in the interior. "Long Slip Mountain" gave such a view. To the east, south and west lay extensive plains and downs covered with pastures, but to the north were peaks of the Southern Alps "so numerous and so similar that a great difficulty occurred as to which should be the objects of trigonometrical observation". With the thermometer at 85 degrees in the camp below, Thomson was glad that there was snow with which to cool his parched lips, but his subsequent thirst must have been considerable.

The party crossed the Lindis Pass on 17 December and described it as "a neck fifty feet high". They travelled down the beautiful Lindis Valley, turned west and went up a spur of Black Knob Mountain and that night camped near the snowline. The following day they trailed over numerous minor peaks till at noon they reached the main one. Thomson was spellbound and wrote: "At our feet was the Hawea Lake, deep, blue and narrow, surrounded by extensive forests, reaching from the snow





#### MARLBOROUGH VALLEYS

From high on the Inland Kaikoura Range early morning sunlight models the spurs of lower country in the Awatere Valley. Dashwood and Mitchell began their trail to Canterbury from the hills to the left.



#### PASS TO ENTERPRISE

The Harper Pass was key to the first transalpine crossing of the Main Divide of the Southern Alps. This glimpse from the Upper Taramakau riverbed does not show the turbulent river that endangered the lives of explorers and gold diggers.



#### OTAGO FOOTHILLS

Sheep country of the Lindis Pass explored by J. T. Thomson has a beauty of its own. Crosslit spurs bring the country into living relief.

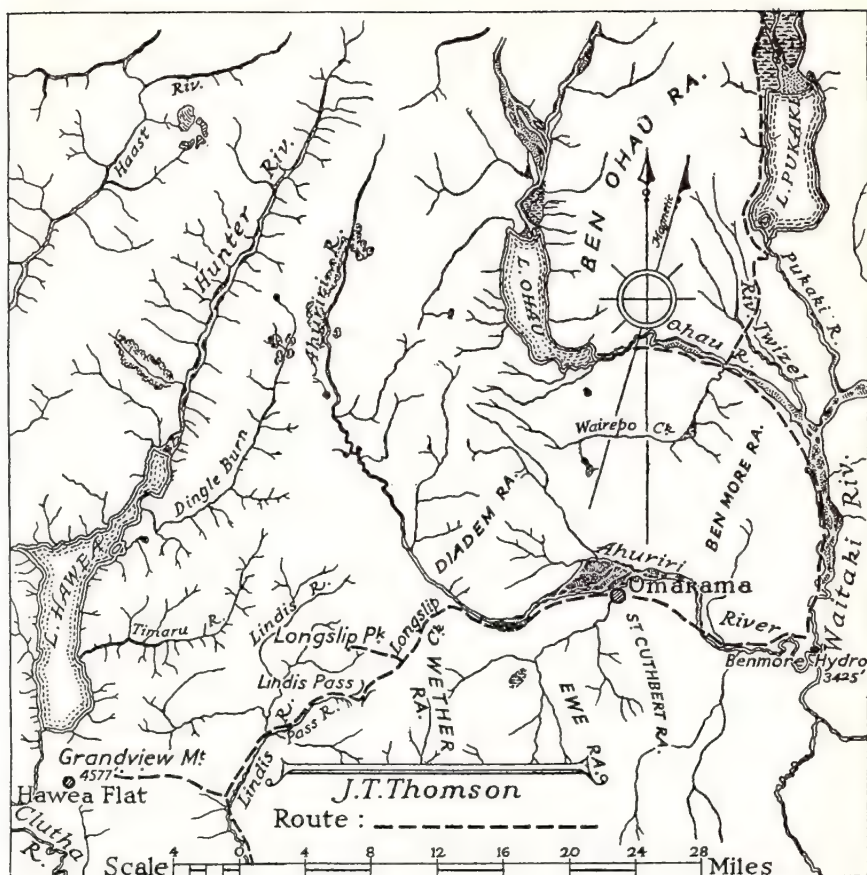


#### HIGH COUNTRY

Thomson's route of exploration lay up the west shore of Lake Pukaki with this view of Mount Cook dominating the Mackenzie Country.



J. T. Thomson, about 1860.



*Thomson's journey to the interior of Otago was not rigorous by the standards of travel in bushed areas but his need to climb to summits as part of his reconnaissance survey work made his expedition an energetic one.*



line to the white gravelly shores; and about five miles westward lay the Wanaka Lake, more open, but broken with promontories and islets, and having the peculiarity marked in all the Maori sketches, of a long narrow eastern arm." He described feeders of the Clutha River issuing from the lakes, the plains of the Upper Clutha Valley, and a mountain he called Pisa because of a leaning rock on its summit. He changed the name of his viewpoint from "Black Knob Mountain" to the more euphonious "Grandview". Its height was 4,797 feet.

From Grandview Thomson headed south along the ranges to within half a mile of the Clutha River, at that stage in "high flood and unfordable". He had fixed prominent features and returned on 22 December with his party to the Ahuriri. They went to Lake Ohau, where Thomson wrote: "the head of the Ohau Lake cannot be more than 25 or 30 miles distant from Jackson's Bay on the west coast, and the most practicable route to the west appears to be from it, over a gorge on the Snowy Ranges." It is interesting to reflect that Leonard Harper (Chapter 8) was at that time making his pioneer trip in Westland. The pass from Lake Ohau to Westland suspected by Thomson would have been Brodrick Pass and was not in fact crossed for another 33 years (Chapter 14).

The party left Lake Ohau and proceeded to Lake Pukaki. The pack-horses remained at the Ohau River because of fording difficulties. Thomson wrote that he rode a horse along the southern shores of Lake Pukaki as far as the country would allow, and then continued on foot. He described the head of the lake as "a marsh . . . then a desert of sand about two miles in breadth reaching to the base of Mount Cook", and noted that a shepherd had reported that the desert abounded in quicksands.

"Mount Cook," wrote Thomson, "the monarch of southern mountains, was full in view, distant about 25 miles, and towering 13,000 feet above the sea, was clothed in snow from its tapering peak, to its base, and supported as it is by rugged precipitous sides, surrounded by desert and utterly barren mountains and valleys; its appearance, however calculated to excite the admiration of the lovers of the picturesque, possessed with its magnificence, so much of the appalling and forbidding in its barren dreary wildness, that most visitors would unconsciously turn aside and relieve the eye with the more tame and rounded

grassy downs to be seen stretching for many miles in the direction from whence they had approached."

Thomson gave names to some features that his successor, Julius Haast, changed five years later. With his reconnaissance of the interior completed Thomson went down the Waitaki to the west Kurow Range, where he hoped to cross to the Taieri, but three days of snowstorm and the broken nature of the country made the going unsuitable for unshod and footsore horses.

The party returned to Otepopo and revisited the Taieri Lake, made observations from the Rock and Pillar Range, and on 13 January 1858 headed for Dunedin. Thomson estimated that his expedition had covered some 4,900 square miles of pastoral country. He suggested that a pioneer corps of road-makers should help the first runholders, as it was unfair to expect the latter to do such work when pastoral development would fill their time.

In a postscript to his report Thomson wrote that he had found frequent remnants of moa bones, that pigs and dogs had been seen near Taieri Lake, but that otherwise there had been no animals observed, only a few rats and birds, and that his party could not detect "the reported Wanaka Volcano".

Thomson's full account was published in two Otago newspapers and undoubtedly stimulated sheepfarmers to stock large areas of their province. His writing was fluent, and his pamphlets of a technical nature, such as *Principles and Details . . . of the Province of Otago* (1861) and *Survey System of Otago* (1875) explained concisely his theories about triangulation. His papers read in Otago and Scotland were packed with facts. His comparison between Malay and Maori words made an interesting study for readers of the *Journal* of the Royal Geographical Society. Thomson's whimsical yet tendentious humour and wide interests found some expression in his *Rambles with a Philosopher* (1867) which was published under the pseudonym of "an Otagonian". In fact this series of dissertations and imaginary dialogues would be essential reading for any student of Thomson's life and times.

The lighter parts of Thomson's *Rambles* are rather heavy by today's standards. For example he described a surveyor thus: "He worked by contract at a shilling an acre, and to keep his

men together where labour was so valuable, he took the hint of the Dunedin jailer and endeavoured to retain them about him by exercising his moral influence and he found by experience that the strongest moral influence consisted in wine and music, so he made ample shift to have these always in store. He further informed us that, while he had all the responsibility, his earnings were somewhat less than one of his labourers."

One of the most interesting sidelights in this period writing was the reference to "the well-known Reko, the Maori", whom he described as having a slave girl of 15 years. Reko, or so he wrote, cleaned the floor of his hut and on it drew a map of the lakes of the interior of Canterbury and Otago and showed his trail from Kaiapoi near Christchurch to Tutarau in Southland.

Thomson had a notable career as a surveyor. When he wrote in one of his publications that an Apprentice must have: "1. A healthy and vigorous constitution; 2. Good eyesight for observing; 3. Knowledge of Arithmetic; 4. To write a neat legible hand; 5. Taste for drawing", and added the technical qualifications necessary for higher grades of "Section Surveyors" and "Geodesical and Reconnaissance Surveyors" he was in his element. As Surveyor-General for New Zealand from 1876, Thomson exerted great influence. He was not successful in political ambitions, but his work for scientific bodies was important. He died in 1884.

Thomson's memorial lies in a reference to his work made by an officer of the Survey Department in 1925. "(He was) deputed to organise a Survey Department for the colony, in place of the several provincial systems. He immediately visited the various provinces, inspected the work and methods in vogue therein, conferred with the officers in charge, recommended changes and a uniform method of surveying, and formed a Department that has been maintained with little alteration to the present day".

It is fitting that the man who laid the foundations of good planning for surveying and mapping should himself have made long and important journeys of exploration. It is unfortunate that his name is by no means a household word in New Zealand. He was a selfless civil servant who was prepared to give his best work without recognition.



*Samuel Butler of the Rakaia*

TAKE A NOVELIST with a satirical bent, a composer with a worship of Handel, an artist with a touch of realism, a sheep farmer with a genius for exploration, a self-sufficient scholar who thought that a woman wrote the *Odyssey*, a man chary of love but stimulating to his friends, and a practical young colonist, and you have seven men. If you rolled them into one man, what a curious mixture he would be. In fact, Samuel Butler was those seven men and that one curious mixture.

In Butler's own view he was at school idle and unpromising, with no talent for study or literature, but an enthusiasm for Handel's music and drawing. His childhood was a hard one, if we are to believe his posthumous novel, *The Way of All Flesh*. Apart from that novel, some of Butler's autobiographical writing recorded the belief that his father would say to himself: "Yes, but what's the use of my getting Sam down if I am not to kick him when he is down. . . . If I am not to kick him now, when am I to kick him?." It was harder to tell whether the son or the father disliked the other the most.

At Cambridge University Butler worked hard, wrote a little, had no idea of taking to literature, and supposed that he was destined for the Church. For a short time he worked as an amateur lay assistant in a parish at Piccadilly, but returned to Cambridge after he had found he could not take a clergyman's career seriously. Time and time again he was to brood on the wrongs of his youth, whose ambush had not left him scatheless, and from whose arrows he tried to get out of range. In after life he thought that the academic life had made him a conceited prig, a hothouse plant, but had not enfeebled him because he was naturally robust and a little given to thinking. He wished to make art his profession, but his parents would not allow that.

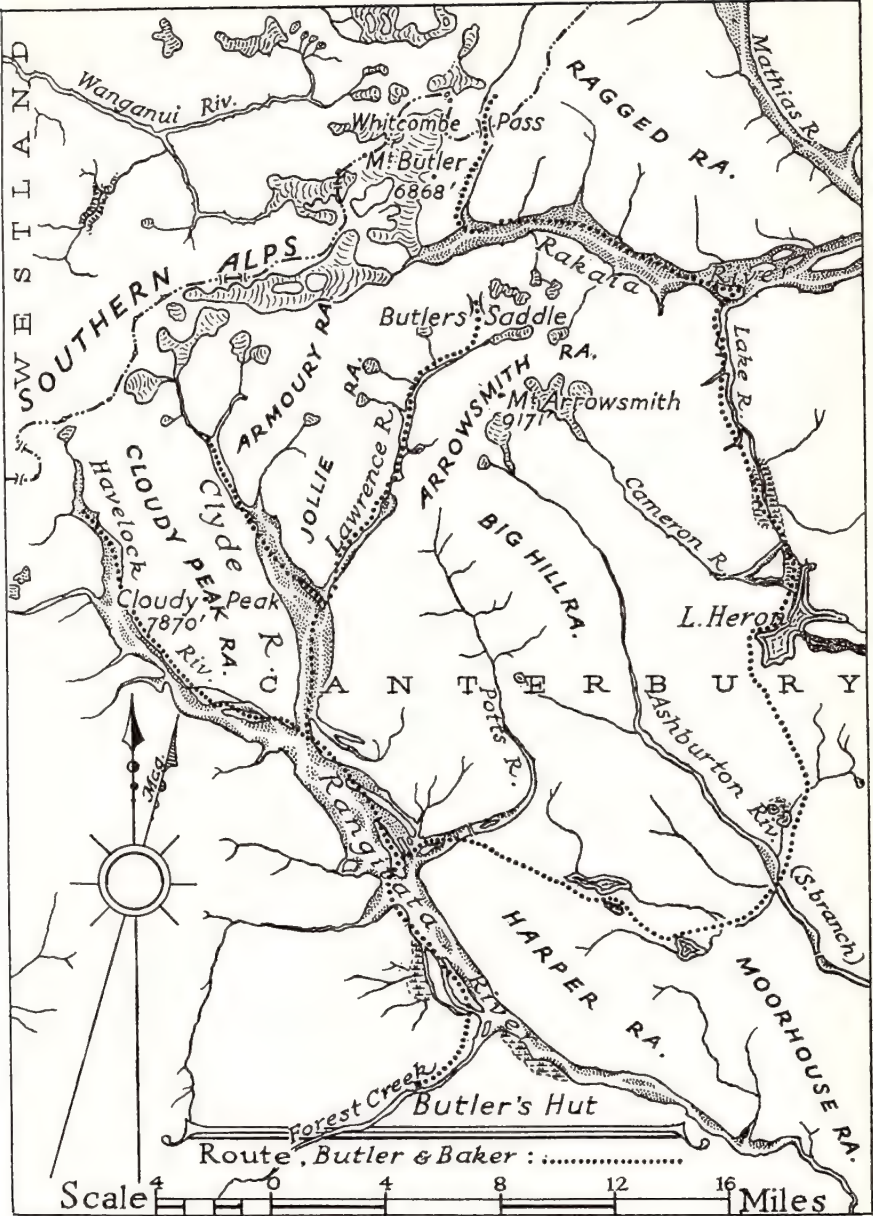
In May 1859, aged 23, he wrote to his mother "I should then make the best of a bad business and go off to New Zealand with whatever money I could raise, or go in for the civil service

examinations, and try for an appointment under government. . . ." Finally it was decided that New Zealand should be the country and sheep-farming the occupation. His passage was paid for the ship *Burmah*, but it was well that he sailed on another ship, for the *Burmah* was lost and her fate never known.

After some minor exploring in the Canterbury back-country he took up a run he called Mesopotamia in the Rangitata Valley. He wished to continue exploring for sheep country, and his station made an ideal base for the purpose, because the Main Divide of the Southern Alps had never been crossed from the Rangitata, or from its neighbouring river, the Rakaia, to Westland. Needing a companion, he found one in John Holland Baker, a young surveyor.

It is important to digress on the early life and character of this notable, who had sound physical health, a love of travel, energy, resource and a knowledge of carpentry. Baker was born in 1841, the fourth son of a clergyman. He went to Germany at the age of ten, climbed monastery ruins, skated, and generally enjoyed himself. Five years later he sailed for New Zealand on a voyage of 90 days, helped reef sails and was offered a career as a sailor. He joined his uncle, Archdeacon Mathias, in Christchurch, milked cows in Hagley Park, worked at gardening and tree-planting, and in 1858 became a cadet for a surveyor. His pay was eight shillings a day for carrying a theodolite, pegs, and crowbar and he helped cut survey lines through fern, flax and swamps.

His field work continued with two months in the bush of Banks Peninsula, and his enterprise included such fortuitous results as a black eye gained from a fight with a cockney, and the purchase of two properties at Harewood and Rangiora. He learnt draughting, and in later years remembered such highlights as being locked in a map safe for five hours, and being growled at for toasting sausages on the end of the boss's best silver compass. In 1860, the year he was to join Butler, he bought a mare, had a month's holiday in the back-country, and took up a large run in the Ashburton Valley which he later leased. He grew used to his horse's saddle as a pillow. On completing his survey training he could plot from field notes and draw a complete map. Someone introduced him to Butler in Christchurch and the two young men later discussed plans for





exploration as they ate a Christmas dinner at Mesopotamia. Butler was then 25 by a few weeks and Baker nearly 20.

From Butler's numerous writings and from Baker's excellent diaries it is possible to reconstruct exact details of their journeys in the Rangitata and the Rakaia. Both rivers were wide above their gorges, both glacier-fed, turbulent and dangerous to cross, and both under the dominance of great mountains over 8,000 feet high.

Life in the backblocks was a quaint mixture of domesticities and strenuous exercise. "Your college education, if you have had one," Butler wrote, "will doubtless have made you familiar with the art of making bread . . . you will learn that you must not boil flannel shirts, and experience will teach you that you must eschew the promiscuous use of washing soda . . . your natural poetry of palate will teach you the proper treatment of the onion."

The trails up the Rangitata took Butler and Baker away from such considerations as washing shirts. They left Mesopotamia on 29 December 1860 with two horses and a pack-horse to carry the tent and usual camping equipment and provisions. Searching for a pass was to be on a trial and error basis. A pass had to be viable for stock, or it was no use to the young pastoralists; they were not mountaineering virtuosi, but restless men hunting for new sheep country. After two days they had reached the last grass of the Havelock branch of the Rangitata. They were under the shadow of the Main Divide, with its fine peaks of Sword and Sceptre. There was no pass in that forbidding wall, and its peaks were not to be climbed for another 70 years.

Returning to where they had left their horses they found that fording the Havelock River in the afternoon was trickier than in the morning. Baker described in his diary how he used his glacier pole to steady him in the strong current, till he lost his footing and was washed down a rapid in water that curled over big rocks, until he was luckily taken to a bank to which he could clamber. Butler suffered the same experience, and how Baker laughed to see his friend's head down and feet up. They wrung out their clothes and had no thought of their risk of having been drowned. On regaining the horses, they boiled the billy, cooked supper, slept on a bed of fern, and rode back to Mesopotamia after a good night's sleep.

A week's rest set them up nicely for another attempt. Their next hope lay in the Clyde branch of the Rangitata. The Clyde runs parallel with the Havelock, but is a narrower valley, gorged in its upper reaches, and glacier-bound at the Divide. By 8 January they had chalked up another failure, and retreated to the Lawrence tributary of the Clyde. They followed this valley to the last grass and tethered the horses. A silent and fresh night gave them a sense of peace. The horses neighed to each other, moonlight shone on the mountains, and the men slept with their hips in hollows of grass-covered rocks.

The next morning they proceeded on foot, with loads of blankets, food, and a billy for tea. They were approaching the Upper Lawrence Valley between the Jollie and Arrowsmith Ranges, with a peak over 9,000 feet to their east. Ominous nor'-west clouds covered the ranges at noon. In the afternoon they camped, lashed blankets to their mustering poles by the side of a large rock, made a fern bed, boiled the billy, and prepared for a deluge of rain. When the rain came down, they crept under the improvised shelter, smoked, yarned, chewed meat and biscuits, and waited for the night to pass.

More rain fell on the following day, Baker listened to Butler's stories of his youth, his quarrels with his father, his experiences in the Piccadilly parish, and his determination to migrate to New Zealand. The rain ceased in the afternoon, and a fire of driftwood dried wet gear. By 11 January the storm had passed and their blankets, in contrast, were stiff with frost. A dawn start took them to the foot of a likely pass, up a ravine filled with hard snow, and a long grind uphill to their objective. When they reached the pass, it was only to find that on the far side there was a steep descent to the Rakaia Valley, which they could not tackle, because they had left their horses back in the Lawrence. They saw clearly that the range they had climbed was not the Main Divide. From the pass there was a view across the Rakaia to another pass that led through a break in the Divide to Westland. A further expedition would be necessary.

On the descent back to the Lawrence, Butler slipped on the frozen snow, and although he was not hurt, his trousers were torn. They fed at their camp at noon, walked back to where the horses grazed, and slept well that night. By the following

evening they were back at Mesopotamia. They left the station for another four days for a visit to Christchurch, where Butler admitted to an old settler that he had discovered a vast area of new grazing country.

At the end of January they again left Mesopotamia on their horses, to ride across country, past the Clent Hills and Lake Heron, to the broad expanses of the Rakaia riverbed some 20 miles above its gorges, terraced shelf upon shelf as though it was fortified.

On 2 February they rode up the Rakaia, marvelling at the high mountains on the south and to the west. If they had not previously observed their true pass from their false one, they would never have guessed that there was indeed a gap in the Main Divide. They camped in a clump of scrub at the foot of a stream that led to the true pass. Further up the Rakaia, a glacier came half-way across the main riverbed.

It is likely that the two explorers rose with the dawn as they prepared to prove that their new pass was feasible for foot travel. They had a steady easy climb up the Louper Valley to a false pass, beyond that to the true pass, and beyond that again to the head of a river falling to the north. They had crossed the Main Divide to Westland. Far in the north, the Harper and Lewis Passes had been crossed, but in 1861 one must remember that Arthur's Pass was undiscovered, the Haast Pass uncrossed by pakehas, and the Southern Alps were virtually *terra incognita* for hundreds of miles.

In his novel *Erewhon* Samuel Butler gave full rein to his creative imagination, but many of the topographical and other details in his Chapter V "The River and the Range" were based on fact. He described the pass as "a solemn, sullen place", and who would deride that if a nor'-wester was brewing? He felt within him the momentum of stern music, and his notes, as quoted by his biographer Henry Festing Jones give this descriptive passage of great Handelian chords "one feels them in the diaphragm—they are, as it were, the groaning and labouring of all creation travelling together until now".

Baker was more laconic in his diaries. "Climbed to the top of the pass," he wrote, ". . . and went some distance down the other side . . . found the whole valley so densely timbered that the chance of finding open country seemed hopeless." It would



not have taken long for the two men to have tramped down the Upper Whitcombe Valley to meet the scrub devouring the boulders as the river fell to deep pools, cascades and noisy reaches. They must have re-crossed their pass the same day, for Baker refers to a ducking in the Louper Stream, and a return down the Rakaia.

They parted company at Clent Hills, where Butler rode to Mesopotamia and Baker to Christchurch. Thus the journey ended. They had found their pass, but no vast areas of grazing country. The journey itself had to be the reward.

Both men prospered in their way. Butler was well remembered in Canterbury as "the small dark man with the penetrating eyes who took up a run at the back of beyond, carted a piano up there on a bullock dray . . . and who, when he emerged from his solitude and came down to Christchurch, was the most fascinating of companions". His capital had grown from £4,400 to £8,000, and he recorded that "sheep had bred; wool had kept high and so had sheep" and that his run was "compact, large, well bounded, and in all respects a desirable property".

A lively letter from Butler to an aunt, dated 19 September 1861, gives good sidelights and some sense of humour, such as "I want a wife dreadfully up here. What will you all say if I marry a Maori? Unfortunately there are no nice ones in this island. They all smoke, and carry about eels." He further wrote: "The only thing I really do want is the intellectual society of clever men," but he found that with a robust constitution given by his open air life he "felt an immense intellectual growth . . . which has left me a much happier and more liberal-minded man . . .". The stirrings of *Erewhon* were within him, stimulated by his experiences of exploration. He left New Zealand in 1864 in an American barque bound for Callao, transferred to another ship and reached England in August 1864. Not till 1902 did he meet Baker again, and then in Rome, where they yarned far into the night. Butler died that same year, but Baker lived for another 28 years, with a fine record of survey work in New Zealand.

Butler's *Note-Books* includes a precise paragraph that his pass was "too rough to go down without more help than we had" and explains that as a result of his report to the Survey

Department Whitcombe was sent across to the West Coast, where he drowned in a crossing of the flooded Taramakau River. Whitcombe's companion, Jacob Lauper, survived, to write a graphic account for the Canterbury Government, and to have his name, mis-spelt as Louper, placed on a peak above the pass and a Rakaia tributary below it. Whitcombe's name was commemorated on the pass and on a fine peak at the head of the Ramsay Glacier. The Butler Range was named merely as a subsidiary ridge of Louper Peak, Butler's Saddle marks the pass from the Lawrence Valley, and Baker received no recognition at all on the official map of the Rakaia Valley. In the thirties a young generation of mountaineers named a high alpine pass "Erewhon Col" to revive interest in the part taken by Butler in Rakaia exploration.

In recent years there has been great interest shown in the trails followed by Butler and Baker in the Rangitata and the Rakaia. Many tramping and climbing parties have covered the same ground for themselves, and re-read Butler's writings and novels with new awareness of the experiences that prompted them. No exploration has been in vain, and though Butler and Baker gained no pasture lands of value they earned an honoured place in the annals of a young province and colony.

*James Hector of the Matukituki*

IF A MOTIVE should be stated for exploring, it is fair to point out that a geologist in new country would need to make maps as well as chase rocks and fossils. If the rigours of a journey made it impossible to produce maps, then a sketch map could help locate a route and important geological features.

For a young province such as Otago flushed with gold discoveries in the early sixties it was very important to have geologists and map-makers at work. Prospectors were by nature both curious and secretive, and were sufficiently self-reliant to strike boldly across rivers and ranges, fearing, as Charles Douglas put it, "neither death nor the Devil". These men did not need maps when their eye for country was as highly developed as a sheepman's. The miner Caples, for example, explored from Lake Wakatipu to Martins Bay early in 1863 and thus was the first white man to the Hollyford Valley.

The Otago Provincial Government had teamed up the surveyor J. T. Thomson and the geologist Dr. James Hector to probe the interior from the Tasman Sea, but they had to wait till a vessel was commissioned for such a purpose. Hector was one of the great explorers of his time, and, unlike some of his colleagues, was a veteran in mountain experience, if young in years. Born in 1834 he had been a pupil at the Royal High School of Edinburgh from 1845 to 1849, an interesting if tenuous link with the Westland explorer Charles Douglas who went there the following year. Both of these men disliked office work and their strenuous careers took them in 1862, though on different ships, to Otago as migrants. But whereas Douglas went to a sheep run as cadet, Hector was by that time qualified in several fields.

Hector had taken a full medical degree, and with it, a sufficient experience in geological work to sail with Palliser's 1857 expedition to Canada to find an overland route linking the Pacific coast with that of the Atlantic. The climax of months of

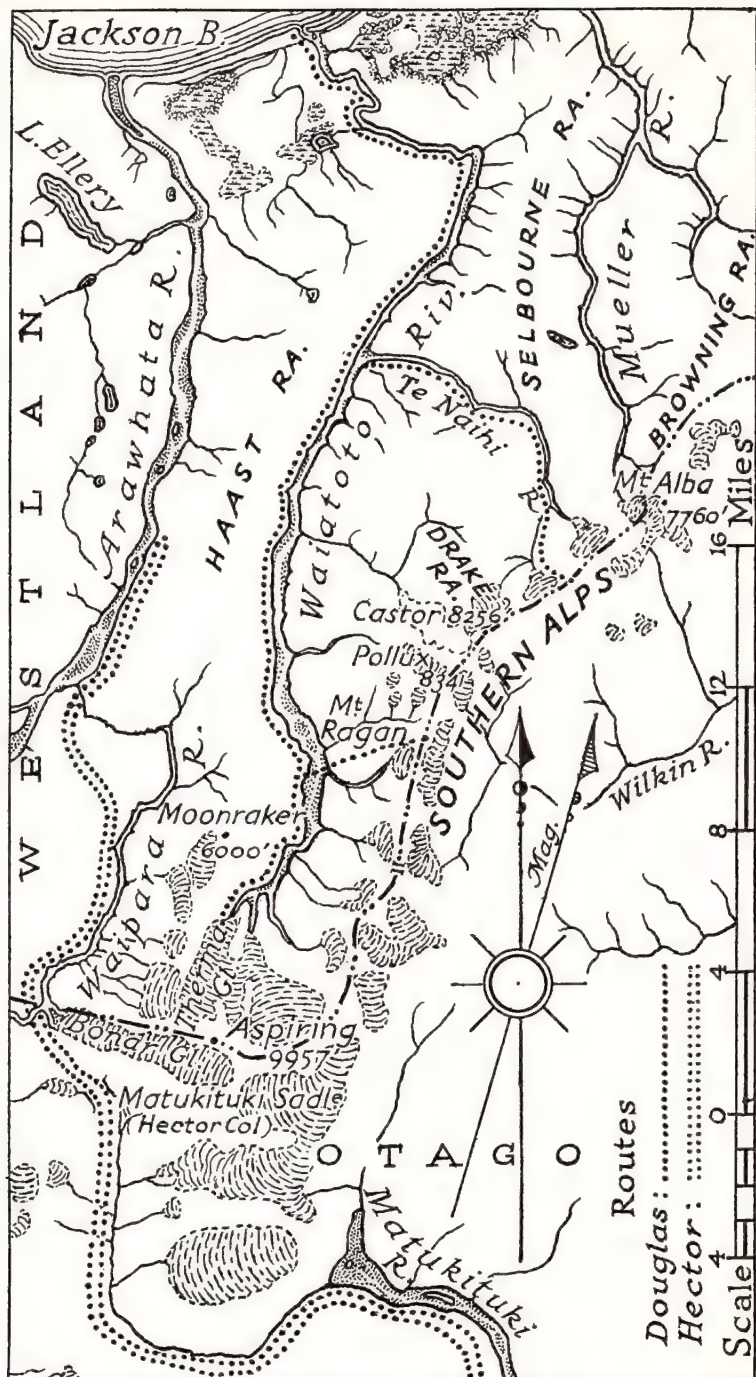


canoeing, foot travel, climbing, adventures and privation was the discovery of the Kicking Horse Pass, the pass essential to a crossing of the Canadian Rockies, later to be used by the transcontinental Canadian Pacific Railway. He also visited California and Mexico before he returned to his homeland and the honours due, including a gold medal from the Royal Geographical Society.

On his arrival in Otago the Provincial Government made him its geologist and this post carried the obligation to make an exploratory survey of back-country untrodden even by Maoris. One can assume that Hector, then aged 28, was fit, mentally and physically for the arduous duties ahead of him. New Zealand would be small country by comparison with Canada, but New Zealand too had a share of hazards from rivers and mountains. His first trip in October 1862 to the Matukituki Valley beyond Lake Wanaka took him to the summit of a peak, from which he could see a break in the Main Divide near Mount Aspiring. Because of the delay in obtaining a ship for the West Coast expedition, Hector decided to approach the Tasman Sea from the rugged mountainous country of the interior, and, with his knowledge of the Lower Matukituki, chose that valley as his route.

It was one of the important functions of the newspapers of the period to stimulate public interest in the progress of exploration. The files of many newspapers, both provincial and local, gave a detailed record by prospectors and surveyors. In their absence many journeys would be unknown, because all too often the travellers kept no journals or diaries, and official reports were meagre and sometimes shorn of personal digressions. Hector's expedition was fortunately reported fully by a staff member, J. W. Sullivan, of the *Otago Daily Times*, whose despatches were lively and accurate. They aroused in their readers a sense of anticipation of stirring trials and the explorers, in their turn, must have felt grateful that their friends and relations, as well as a wider public, waited for news of discoveries and of a safe return to civilisation.

The first instalment of the account of "Dr. Hector's Exploring Expedition into the Interior" was published in the *Otago Daily Times* of 9 February 1863 and was dated 24 January from a camp on the south shore of Lake Wanaka. The party,



including Hector, Sullivan and one Rayer, had travelled up the Waitaki from Oamaru, past sheep country, some of whose pastures were "proverbial for their sterility". The sight of Mount Domett with its traces of winter snows was regarded as "a pretty good indication as to the frigid hospitality we shall receive from our mountain friends still farther to the westward". They passed Otamitita (Otematata) today the centre of the Benmore earth dam settlement, and went up the Ahuriri and over a saddle to the Mackenzie country.

Sullivan gave an amusing description of "pemmican" prepared from mutton. Thin slices of meat were cut into even thinner slices, hung to dry in the sun, pounded, covered with melted fat, and packed into a hide bag. It could be eaten raw, and it took very little to satisfy the heartiest appetite. Hector's camp resembled a butchery, with one man slicing and another drying meat, while another melted fat.

The land near Lake Wanaka appealed to the travellers for its good soil, where a pumpkin of that period grew to six feet in circumference and weighed nearly 100 lbs. The men were ready for "the *terra incognita* in the mountains, which . . . appear very formidable barriers".

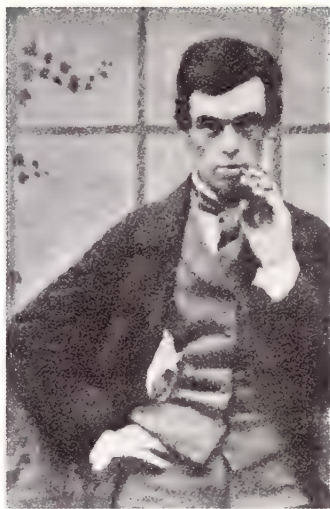
The second instalment by Sullivan, whose initials seem to have changed from "J.W." to "M.", was dated 6 February 1863, from the Matukituki River. He recorded how the party split into two; one group taking loads on pack-horses around the western shores of Lake Wanaka to the Matukituki, while the other braved the lake itself in a boat. Such were the caprices of the lake that it could change from "clear placid" to "boisterous foaming billows". One storm stove in the boat, which had to be repaired. On 31 January the heaviest baggage and four live sheep made the 10-mile trip up the lake in about three hours.

As one man baled and two men rowed, the sheep gave trouble. When the boat had crossed the bar between the lake and the river and were hauling the outfit up the swift stream, a sheep escaped. Later the pack-horse party joined up with the boatmen, and Hector waded the river on a tracking (hauling) rope. Camp was made on a broad flat. They took the horses over a spur of 700 feet and down again to the main valley. The next camp was sited at "Thompson's Cattle Flat". From a





Butler's hut at Mesopotamia in the Rangitata.

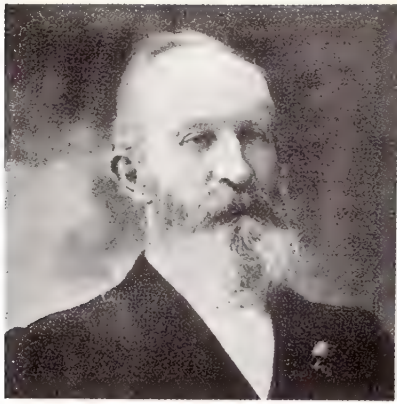


Samuel Butler, aged 22 years.



#### UP THE RAKAIA

The arrow marks Butlers Saddle. The Louper Stream runs from the foreground down valley to join the Rakaia in the centre. Scrub-covered spurs rise on the right to the Butler Range. The photograph is taken half-way from the Rakaia to the Whitcombe Pass.



Gerhard Mueller in 1904.



Charles Douglas as a lad in Scotland. The portrait was painted by his brother William Fettes Douglas before 1862.

## WESTLAND EXPLORATION

Douglas made this sketch of the Hector Col from the Waipara River in 1885 when he accompanied Mueller on a survey expedition.



reference to the Columbia River in North America it is likely that Sullivan, the reporter, was the same as Sullivan, the secretary of Palliser's 1857 expedition. He speculated whether oats or barley would grow in the Lower Matukituki, and commented on the difficulties of "access and egress" to such a remote spot.

Buchanan, an artist and botanist who had joined the party, was delighted with the discovery of new specimens. From a sheltered place further up the valley, and near a large flat, Hector made his central or base camp. Sullivan reported ducks, wekas, and kakas were plentiful; eels abounded in the creeks, and friendly robins paid their calls.

At that point the narrative ceased, and was continued under the date 8 March "Having just returned from our trip to the West Coast . . .". The exploration began on 11 February when the party of six again split up. Hector, Sullivan and L. Rayer left for a feint at the unknown. Three pack-horses carried provisions and gear for a month. Instead of a tent they followed the North American custom of taking a large waterproof fly, which could shelter them and, at the same time, allow them to sit in front of a fire.

At the junction of the east and west branches of the Matukituki, Hector, from his previous knowledge of the valley, knew that the way to Westland lay up the west. The party found the beech forest heavy going, and some of the tussock country was cursed with speargrass, described by Sullivan as "bayonette". Beyond this point Sullivan saw his first view of Mount Aspiring, as the grand peak came through the clouds which had guarded it for several days. The river was flooded after the rain, and the party wished to travel on the west bank of the river, which is still considered the best one today. They were, however, forced by the nature of the bush and bluffs to make fords that took them all their time and experience to accomplish safely.

As they travelled up the dark green valley they had reason to admire the generous cascades of water that tumbled from glacier basins, with spray whirled by the wind into fantastic shapes. At Cascade Flat, near the present site of the palatial New Zealand Alpine Club hut, there was a striking panorama from a grassy terrace, but the obstacles ahead were not



reassuring for horse travel. Hector went down to the river and for a short while found a bouldery passage, but inevitably a way had to be cut through bush and scrub. By the time the party had crossed Shovel Flat they realised that the horses had reached the limit of their usefulness. There was plenty of feed on the flats for grazing animals. Hector set them free to feed and to wander, knowing that the men back at the main camp would intercept them if they reached the area. The feint at exploration was turning into a skirmish.

By 15 February Hector was eager to prove that a pass lay from his province of Otago to the wilderness beyond. He climbed through the bush to 5,000 feet, probably on the west bank, but although he saw many mountain barriers, particularly between the Matukituki and the Arawhata country, he did not spot any feasible route either to the east or the west. But to the north he saw a low depression in the main range, and there, at the head of the Matukituki, lay the hopes of success.

The following day on the valley floor Hector supervised the packing of three loads of 50 lbs. each. The large oiled fly was deemed to be too heavy for men to carry so they would have to rely on blankets and an opossum rug for protection. They also left behind a cache of provisions. As they swagged up the valley they kept, so far as it was possible, to the main riverbed, with its bouldery impediments. Sullivan gave a long account of the contrast with the struggle with the packs and the sublimity of nature; but when he called the Matukituki a "wild, rolling river" he was not exaggerating. A gorge in the river compelled the party to strike into the scrub. Beyond that point they reached a flat where an avalanche of snow had torn its way over the vegetation down to the valley. They realised that there was some stiff climbing ahead, so Hector made a second cache of provisions, by which they reduced their loads to 25 lbs. They tied the cached provisions in a bundle and hung it from a tree.

The climb up the valley from the second cache was steeper, and led to a tongue of avalanche snow that had cut a swathe through the bush to near the river. A further four miles in the early afternoon took the party to what Sullivan called "the limit of the woods" or the grassline. They made a camp there because it was the last place where they could cut firewood

till they had crossed the Divide and reached "the limit of the woods" in Westland.

The party plodded up the open head of the valley on 17 February over old moraines "a confused mass of angular and smoothly worn boulders distributed without any regard of size, or order of deposit". An hour of walking over these boulders led to the base of the saddle, near two small glaciers and many small streams. The mighty Matukituki had diminished its volume. They climbed to the saddle, now named Hector Col, estimated at 5,899 feet, but actually some 800 feet lower. The view was splendid. "The high mountains to our right, with their clear blue pinnacles of ice pointing to the sky, and shrouded in enormous glaciers, presented a truly alpine scene, while the whole valley at our feet was completely filled by a glacier occupying an area of about 5 square miles." After Hector had named this glacier and the river to which it gave birth "the Haast", after his opposite number in Canterbury, they made a "perilous and laborious" descent. Sullivan compared their antics to those of flies on a wall, as they threw their swags ahead of them to be less encumbered. Although they had crossed the Divide at 1 p.m. they did not reach easier going till near dark. Even then they were some 800 feet above the level part of the glacier and Hector decided to re-ascend to a rocky ledge where they could shelter from falling stones and avalanches.

The beds of rock were hard, but the travellers gathered some dry stalks of alpine plants, boiled the billy, half-roasted a kaka, and "very like the 'Root Digger Indians', snuggled together in our mountain hole till the first rays of morning again revealed the icy pinnacles that towered above us, and the deep field of ice spread out at our feet". The wind blew that night, and an occasional crash of an avalanche made the party glad of shelter. The following morning they climbed down to the small valley glacier, where crevasses perplexed them. Hector had brought his tracking-line of 80 feet and  $\frac{3}{16}$  th of an inch in diameter. In Canada he had used such a rope to haul canoes. In New Zealand its primary use was to make river crossings safe. The party used the rope to help them past the crevasses on the glacier. Hector had an ice-axe with which to cut steps on the steepest slopes. Where they could not safely jump across a crevasse with

packs on, they made a kind of flying fox with the rope and relayed the loads over.

Once past the small glacier, probably from an unnamed peak, they gathered wood for a fire and had a good meal before tackling Haast's Glacier (now the Bonar). Hector led his party roped across this larger glacier, through broken sections and were threatened by rock avalanches from Mount Aspiring, one of which only missed them by a few minutes.

However it was a fine warm day and they enjoyed the experience of traversing a Westland glacier for the first time. Sullivan's description was a good one, and precise to the point of mentioning the "moulins" or runnels of ice-water forming mill-streams and pot holes.

They camped near the terminal of the glacier, where the river began. Sullivan called this the "Haast" but the river now called by that name was a considerable way north. We now know the river north of Hector Col as the Waipara. On 19 February the party made their third cache; that time  $1\frac{1}{2}$  lbs. of flour and three boxes of sardines. A full day westwards gave them 8 miles of valley behind them. The going alternated between boulder-climbing and bush-whacking and it was not long before the river was unfordable at will. They passed two gorges, where Hector estimated the fall as being 7 in 30.

After another 6 miles of rough travelling "a cut cliff . . . quite devoid of vegetation" barred their way. Hector retreated up the valley to gain a ford from the east bank to the west, made the fourth cache (one meal of pemmican and flour), and headed for the range between the Waipara and the Arawhata, which ultimately joined. By the evening of 21 February the party was on the summit of what they called "Pigeon Mountain" (Mount Snowden) and continued their traverse the next morning to a clear view of the Tasman Sea, described as being 13 miles away, and to another view of the valley they had penetrated from Otago. The panorama confirmed that this high level route had avoided a canyon in the Lower Waipara, which joined a river named Jackson (after Jacksons Bay, clearly visible to the explorers) but now known as the Arawhata (Arawata). Sullivan was impressed by the stands of bush on the Arawhata flats far below, and by the sight of Mount Aspiring and the Northern Olivines.



The following day the sight of the Tasman Sea tempted the party to push along past Pigeon Mountain for a mile and a half, then down past snow tussock slopes, small lakes, and earthquake fissures, and mysterious tracks that had probably been made not by Maoris but by ground birds such as the kakapo. They reached the forks of the "Haast" and "Jackson" (the Waipara and Arawhata) and went to bed supperless in a camp that was visited by mosquitoes and rain. On 23 February torrents of rain and no breakfast were preludes to a tricky ford of the Waipara. They travelled down the Arawhata on the east bank, took to the bush where the river had cut in, and made a wigwam like Indians from poles and blankets. "With a little tea and a consoling pipe we endeavoured to sleep off appetite" but luckily Hector shot a pigeon, and stewed it with flour and water.

The heading of the newspaper despatch of that part of the expedition was dramatic as whole. It ran:

**"DR. HECTOR'S EXPEDITION SUCCESSFUL  
PENETRATION TO THE WEST COAST TO WITHIN  
SIGHT OF THE SEA AND EIGHT MILES OF THE SHORE"**

Later climbers thought that Hector had erred in making 16 miles 8 miles, but who shall quibble for 8 miles or complain if the journey was described as being ". . . to the very brink of the ocean . . . at a great risk." Sullivan wrote that had there been plenty of good provisions and better weather the last stage to the sea itself could have been the easiest of the trip. But they had had enough. They had to get back to Otago.

At noon on 24 February they began the return journey. A high climb to bypass a canyon, a continuation of the ascent through thick bush in heavy rain, and a camp without dry firewood made their situation miserable. They took off wet clothes, wrung them, and shivered in wet blankets. Steady rain continued the following morning as they rolled up sodden blankets and broke camp. As they recrossed the range to the Waipara, the sun came out, they roasted a kaka and made some tea. But three days existing on one pigeon and a kaka was hungry work. On regaining the Waipara they welcomed their cache of pemmican and flour. They ate half of this and made a shelter of branches, and enjoyed good sleep. Two days rain then confined them to camp. All the food was gone and the rivers were flooded.

March began with a desperate attempt to ford the river. Rayer balanced a heavy log on his shoulder to give him weight. He got the rope to the far bank after twice being swept off his feet. Hector and Sullivan followed, and in the rain they struggled back up the valley to the camp at the terminal face of the Bonar Glacier. Rats had eaten flour in their cache but the sardines were intact though the tins had been taken some 12 feet from the cache. The weather made a partial clearing and their hopes rose, but the next day another storm burst, and there was no safety in crossing the fog-ridden glacier and water-polished ice. The last tin of sardines must have seemed very small. They made soup from toi-toi grass and strips of sheepskin from the bag which had held the flour. Blinded by smoke from the fire and weak for want of substantial food they were in a bad plight.

At last the weather cleared and they recrossed the glacier, grateful for the skill and leadership of Hector. He had to cut steps above deep crevasses. He located the route up to the saddle and back down to the Matukituki. How merciful it was that the weather showed them favour. They reached "the limit of the woods" in the late afternoon. They had made fair time because of virtually light loads.

On the next day they reached the cache where the provisions hung from a tree and feasted on fried and boiled food until they sank on to beds drenched with rain. On 5 March they continued their descent of the Matukituki Valley to the next cache, where the provisions were not as much as they could have wished. Hector had a tough job to catch a horse on 6 March for the animals had run wild and gone down the valley some way. Another day saw the remainder of the horses under control and they arrived at the central camp on 8 March.

Sullivan's account refers to attempts to find gold, but under the conditions the party had no success. Hector thought that prospecting in such country would be a matter of chance, but that it would be a good idea to make the approach from the West Coast side and have more time in hand than did his expedition.

Hector left for habitation on 15 March. The three men had felt the after-effects of exposure to cold and wetness. Sullivan ended his despatch with a note of gratitude to Hector whose instructive talks in camp had given him much information. The

*Otago Daily Times* paid tribute to its reporter and "the vivid, but unostentatious account of the perils of the journey" and "the gallantry of those who accompanied . . .". At this point readers must say farewell to Rayer and Sullivan whose subsequent careers are unknown. But Hector lived a full and useful life in a young colony.

In the winter of 1863 he sailed around Fiordland to Martins Bay and led a party overland to Lake Wakatipu by the Hollyford Valley and sub-alpine passes. Although he had in that instance been preceded by Alabaster and Caples his journey was valuable for its official account and details. Two years later he settled in Wellington as the first Director of New Zealand's Geological Survey. This important post was an exacting one but in 1868 he formed the New Zealand Institute and edited its *Transactions*. He also took an essential part in the establishment of the University of New Zealand and was later knighted. He died in 1907 aged 73. What a contrast was his full academic and professional career compared to the lonely wanderings of Charles Douglas, one of the next men in the Waipara.

In 1885 with Gerhard Mueller he took part in a survey expedition that travelled up the western bank of the Waipara and came down the eastern bank and took observations from Mount Hyperia. Mueller's report noted that "the carrying of heavy swags . . . being a matter of very serious considerations, due allowance for bad weather had not been made, and our stock of provisions ran out. For several days we had to go on short allowance but for the last three days we had absolutely nothing else to eat but the birds we caught, and we felt rather 'weakish' by the time we got back to the bay" (Jacksons).

Mueller referred to Hector Col as "The Matukituki Saddle" and described it as "inaccessible from the Westland side. It is a smooth, steep rock-face, devoid of any vestige of vegetation from the Bonar Glacier up to its top. The only possible way I could see of reaching the top was by ascending Mount Barff by a very circuitous route, and then descending about 2,000 feet to the Matukituki Saddle." He added, "I need not say that I did not attempt to carry out that plan."

Well over 70 years after Hector had crossed his col from the Matukituki to the Waipara, the valley glaciers and some of the peaks were still unvisited. The known retreat of the Bonar



Glacier, the deep gorge near the fault line in the lower valley, and the precipitous nature of the Westland slopes of Hector Col all combined to provide a "keep off the snowgrass" notice. It was fitting that the man to take up the challenge, was John Christie, a surveyor and engineer who was also a mountaineer. Christie had taken the brunt of the work in surveying the new road and tunnel from the Upper Hollyford to Milford Sound, and had gaily established trig stations on inaccessible ledges. He was also slow and patient by nature: excellent qualities for the rigours of Westland gorges.

One of Christie's best trips in the Matukituki—Arawhata—Waipara watershed, and he made several, was at the end of December 1939, with Allan Shannon, a lively schoolteacher from Hokitika. They met Arthur P. Harper, then aged 75 years, returning from an ascent of Hector Col, as they left an alpine club camp in the Matukituki for Westland. They crossed the col after some 13 hours of hard swagging, and had to make a big variation in the descent to Westland. It was not possible to use Hector's route because of glacier retreat, but Christie's survey and engineering experience in steep Fiordland made light of steep snowgrass and he spotted a traverse and descent that avoided the most dangerous obstacles.

As the two mountaineers descended the valley they were well aware of the obstacles surmounted by Hector, and what with fording tricky side streams, climbing over bluffs to avoid bad patches of going in the riverbed, and acrobatics on large boulders, they shared his experiences. They also shared the experience of lying in camp while rain flooded the rivers, but it is certain that their camp was better found and that they had reserves of provisions, whereas Hector was usually wet and hungry.

After some days in the valley they crossed the range between the Waipara and the Arawhata, as had Hector, to avoid the lower gorge. A day of over 13 hours took them in the steps of the master, as it were, and to within 10 minutes of the floor of the Arawhata. Eight days after leaving the Matukituki camp Christie and Shannon had reached the West Coast, and thus, in New Zealand's Centennial year of 1940, had completed the task originally tackled by Hector.

The Waipara Valley is today seldom penetrated by mountaineers. It deserves more attention than it has had. Some

Otago and Wellington stalwarts have continued the pioneering begun by Hector, Mueller and Christie but there are many new routes to be made up the peaks and new saddles to be crossed by men. Better equipment and a reasonable supply of provisions with modern aids such as air-drops could make easy work of the problems faced by Hector. If one is tempted to comment on Hector's enterprise it is to emphasise that in using his ice-axe to cross a glacier he was in metaphorical company with gallant prospectors who used heavy picks; these men were years ahead of other climbers in New Zealand and all too many of their feats have been lost to history.

*Alphonse Barrington of the Olivines*

THERE ARE IN THE Southern Alps many ice plateaus. Their bounty of snow is the gift bestowed by storms. Their calm serenity is frequently banished by the turbulence of driving wind and fog; their shapely contours are often hidden from the sight of men.

These plateaus nearly always form to the west of the Main Divide and have other hazards and other graces: shattered rock cliffs and twisted icefalls peer down on sheltered grass flats, whence rivulets ripple till a thousand companions join them to rush impetuously to gorges inhabited by deep rivers and giant boulders. When the mighty waters have united they sweep to the Tasman Sea past dark green bush and quite drown with their vigorous bass themes the serried descants of honey-throated birds, the fugitive night cries of wekas and kiwis, and the shrill clamour of kakas and keas.

The Olivine Ice Plateau is the noblest of these features, its only rival the Garden of Eden between the Perth and the Adams of South Westland. Five fine rivers spring from the Olivine ice: the Forgotten, the Barrier, the Red Pyke, the Joe, and the Williamson. The Olivine Plateau is nearly 8 miles long, and, in places, 2 miles wide. Its peaks are not Aspiring's or Tasman's but they have their own personalities, from the determined symmetry of Climax and Destiny, to the rocky mass of Gable and snub perkiness of Ark. Their glaciers have such complexity that it is difficult to thread their needles.

The history of the Olivines began in 1863 when a gold prospector, A. J. Barrington, left Queenstown. His testing ground was the rugged terrain of north-west Otago. He would not have known, or have cared if he had known, that at that time John Ruskin wanted to build a chalet in Switzerland, with Rosetti to design the decorations or Burne-Jones to paint the walls; a project that fell through because the owner's price was far too high. Nor would the tough young miner have realised that the



novelist, George Meredith, was writing "Carry your fevers to the Alps, you of minds diseased; not to sit down in sight of them ruminating, for bodily ease and comfort will trick the soul and set you measuring our lean humanity against yonder sublime and infinite; but mount, rack the limbs, wrestle it out among the peaks; taste danger, sweat, earn rest: learn to discover ungrudgingly that haggard fatigue is the fair vision you have run to earth, and that rest is your uttermost reward." Barrington was to gain such knowledge the very hardest way; danger and sweat were his for the routine, and, however well earned, rest was seldom in his vocabulary.

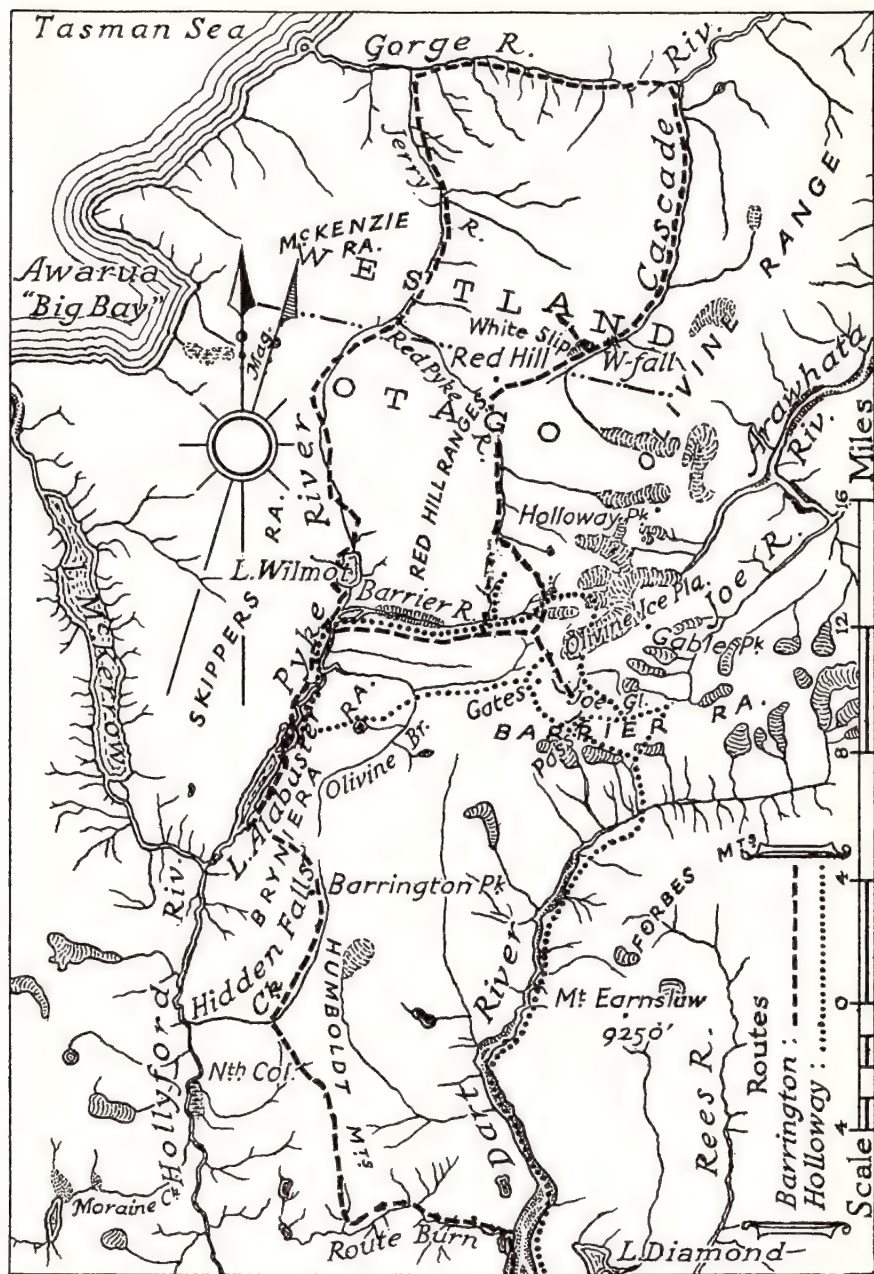
After preliminary feints in the Dart Valley, Barrington returned to the head of Lake Wakatipu. With Edward Dunmore and William Bayliss, he tried the Routeburn, and his entry for Christmas Day reads: "had a plum duff boiling; tapped a brandy bottle which we brought up for the occasion, made tea, cooked four Maori hens and had a jolly afternoon . . .". Two days later they were joined by a man called McGuirk, alias the "Maori Hen", who had "been shepherded by a dozen men on several occasions, but always managed to give them the slip". He told Barrington he could never cross a river by a lake beyond the main range. Barrington promised him that he would make a raft, swim across, and pull the rest of the party across on the raft. The following day they dried their gear after a wet morning, made some progress up the valley, baked some bread and killed two ducks when they camped in weather that was inclined to be wild.

Another day saw the whole party near the snowline. On 30 December they made a pass into the Hidden Falls Creek, now known as "North Col", down "precipices fearful to contemplate: life in jeopardy every five minutes". On the last day of 1863 they followed the Hidden Falls Creek to its head flats where there were quartz boulders in the creek. Crossing the Cow Saddle, they camped 2 miles down the Forgotten River, with Dunmore and Bayliss "completely knocked up". On New Year's Day they struggled over the Alabaster Pass in heavy rain, descended to the bush, dried their clothes by a fire, and slept well on wet moss. Another day saw them at the edge of Lake Alabaster, where they caught an eel weighing 12 lbs. and added a kakapo to the larder. By now they had rationed themselves to two scanty meals a day.

After an eel breakfast on 3 January they wrestled their way through supplejack, bush lawyers and scrub, and camped at the outlet of the lake at the Pyke River. They failed to cross the river, and noted several camp sites used by other prospecting parties. The next day another attempted river crossing was abortive. They were unable to find any wood that would float. With their only tool a tomahawk, they felled a large white pine tree. Provisions were low. Thunder and lightning continued that night. At dawn they continued work on the pine tree, and in the afternoon completed the boat, named appropriately the *Maori Hen*. They launched it, towed it up the river to a ford, and moved the tents. Dunmore and McGuirk agreed to stay in the region prospecting, while Barrington and Bayliss returned to Lake Wakatipu for more provisions, to be oatmeal that would last longer than flour. When Barrington had taken the two men and their swags across the river, one at a time, he and Bayliss packed up a blanket each and 6 lbs. of oatmeal, and set off up the mountains.

When they camped in the rain that night they had neither tent nor tomahawk, so they rigged up a shelter from a blanket and spent a sleepless night. They passed the next day shivering in their forced camp, where their dog caught a kakapo, cooked for supper with a little oatmeal. On 8 January they tried to cross the range, but were delayed by soft snow and a storm on the crest, so had to retreat to camp on the snow, supperless, with wet clothes and a wet blanket. The following day they had better luck, and crossed the Alabaster Pass and Cow Saddle, getting a hawk on the way. When on 10 January they retraced their steps over North Col they took the wrong route and found themselves on a high peak, with a view of the Tasman Sea. They slid down steep snow to the head of the north branch of the Routeburn, caught two wekas and ate well. Another day's toil took them to the Dart Valley within coo-ee of Lake Wakatipu.

Back at the lake they made a small tent and sailed to Queenstown in a boat, presumably borrowed from a sheep station. They bought two hundredweight of oatmeal at Queenstown and other gear. Head winds held up their return for some days. Bayliss went on the spree at the head of the lake and disgusted Barrington by talking too much. Barrington chose another mate, James Farrell, and left Bayliss to his devices. With swags of 107





lbs. each the two men made slow walking up the Dart. Barrington was sick with dysentery. They buried some provisions to lighten their loads and speed their progress, as Barrington realised that his friends at Lake Alabaster would be hungry indeed. But rain held them in their tent, and not till 25 January could they reach a flat in the Routeburn. Another day of rain and flood made them move their tent. Very heavy snowfall blocked North Col. Another three days' rain confined them to a wet tent. By 31 January they were back again in the Hidden Falls Creek.

The first day of February was another day of heavy rain and they camped by a flooded creek. The next day was worse, and Barrington had to contrive to make a water race around the tent, leaving it on an island. He wrote, "I pity the boys, who must be starving and I cannot get to them. The creek is a fearful height." The weather cleared on 3 February and the men felled trees across the creek. Farrell turned back to recross the range to collect 50 lbs. of oatmeal cached on an island in the Dart Valley, while Barrington tramped towards Lake Alabaster. Another day of incessant rain forced him to camp. The following day he reached a point within five miles of the depot at the lake, and was rejoined by Farrell who had been unable to cross the ranges earlier because of new snow.

A daylight start on 6 February took Barrington and Farrell to the lake depot, where they found Dunmore on the far bank of the Pyke River ". . . what a sight, a complete-living skeleton; I never saw anything like him alive. Took him over to the tent, put him in bed and made him a little gruel. He had not eaten any food for twelve days." Dunmore explained that when the provisions were exhausted, McGuirk, the "Maori Hen", had left for Lake Alabaster. McGuirk was never seen again; another lone prospector had joined the ranks of men whose very silence gave tradition to a raw young country.

No doubt Barrington was bewildered; certainly he was a man of compassion, and a man of determination. He packed up a few pounds of oatmeal, a blanket and a tomahawk and yet once more made a weary crossing of the range for more food. Meeting other parties, he was joined by another trier, a Frenchman named Antoine Simonin. By 21 February they were back at Lake Alabaster, referred to by Barrington as "Poverty Lake" for its diet of starvation. They found Farrell well and Dunmore

recovering fast. Three of them made a further crossing back to Queenstown for powder and shot, as they would have to shoot wild game to live off the country they wished to explore. On 1 March they left Queenstown. Two weeks later they were ready to advance into new country, a land of rain forest, gorges, flats of unexpected beauty, and always the brooding and glaciated peaks on the skyline, swept by sudden storms from the Tasman Sea.

Simonin made a pint of wine from tutu berries on 16 March. This was voted a first-rate drink, but the unfortunate dog who ate the dregs thrown on the river beach had a fit and foamed and had to be revived with salt and water forced into his throat. Floods in the Pyke River were stubborn. One night the explorers had to place their provisions and swags high up a tree. Other times scrub and bush lawyer tore their hands and faces. By 23 March they had reached Lake Wilmot, named by them "Plenty Lake" because they shot a large eel and a white crane for food.

They varied progress up the Pyke River above Lake Wilmot by hunting excursions, and on 29 March found good prospects for gold, with quartz boulders and a fine wash. They crossed a saddle from the Pyke River to the Gorge River. This led to the sea, some 15 miles north-east of Big Bay, but they chose to travel up the Gorge Valley and cross to the Lower Cascade. There they found gold in reefs, and a weka and kakapos killed by wild dogs. By 9 April they were travelling south up the Cascade Valley, hampered by fog and rain, with winter near at hand. Food was scarce, and on 13 April they killed a robin and three wrens, which Barrington described as "the smallest joints I ever saw".

They tried to struggle from their "condemned cell", wrung the rain from their shirts and coats, sidled high above the river to avoid waterfalls, and spent some days in getting their bearings. They sometimes were encouraged by getting gold from the river beaches, but, lacking tools and a pump, could not work the gravel as they wished. By a secluded lake they shot ducks but were unable to spear eels. On 21 April Barrington referred to the rain as the heaviest he had seen since he had left Victoria, which was saying a lot. Some days of this rain flooded the country and prevented the prospectors from working. There were no fern-roots for eating; it was a land of stones, timber and water. On 26

April there was but 4 lbs. of oatmeal left, and they were still 80 miles from Lake Wakatipu, as the kea flew.

New ranges, glaciers, gorges and snowfields barred the way. Barrington's instinct told him to climb to the east, towards the Arawhata country and so to Jacksons Bay, but he had no dog to help obtain birds for food, and his mates wished to return to Lake Wakatipu. He tore up a blanket to make a skirt, as his clothes were torn beyond repair.

Weeks of camping in wet weather had weakened the party considerably. The men realised that they could carry only essential gear on the return journey. They abandoned picks, shovels, tin dishes, nails and tools. The going up the Cascade River was grim. Barrington's graphic words ". . . a steep mountain gorge, with the white foam of the river some hundreds of feet below us—jumping from one precipice to another, which under any other circumstances would have looked pretty. We did not, however, stop long enough to admire it, as then it looked hideous."

On 1 May they found the whole river bound by a precipice, over which it tumbled as a large waterfall. This fall was 150 feet high, but its steep approaches make it necessary to sidle high above it before dropping back to the riverbed. The lives of the men depended in some places on a few blades of grass growing from rock faces. Further up the river they found a good flat, grassed and giving hopes of game. Here they crossed from the east bank to the west and made tracks for the Red Hills District. This was a place of rare beauty and minerals, with rata trailing in its sombre green forest perimeter. The Red Hill is made up of peridotite, a rock that glows as though it was bewitched. This formation is truly red in colour; plant life does not thrive there and the most vigorous mountain trees are dwarfed. Beyond the peridotite belt beech forest can flourish. The marked change from barren desolation to green primeval beauty is startling to the few men who have climbed in this region.

Barrington's reaction was well expressed when he wrote of the Red Hill "the side of a large burnt mountain; in gaining the top of which we had a few hours of fearful danger . . . at one time we were two hours getting twenty yards". They reached the top at 1 p.m. on 3 May, traversed to the south and camped high by a creekhead. The following day he lost his mates in a fog, descended





#### A SNOWY BARRIER

Barrington in 1864 and Holloway in 1936 journeyed beyond Mount Cosmos, here seen from the Dart Valley.

#### A ROCKY, ROCKY LAND

The head of the Red Pyke Valley from Trinity Col. Barrington crossed the range to the left, but at which point is not known.





THE WINTER OF 1865  
Browning Pass from the Wilberforce Valley, as painted by Robert Park, a member of Browning's survey party.



A SURVEY CAMP  
The hut and tents at the foot of Browning Pass look bleak and cold under winter snows. This painting was also by Park.

to a river and spent a miserable 10 days till he found them again. It was characteristic both of Barrington's travelling and of exploring that they included experiences such as the sight of quartz reefs and boulders, the capture of small blue mountain ducks, mouthfuls of raw oatmeal, heavy rain and snow, cramp in the legs, a taste of a root of speargrass raw and unpalatable, and the desperate act of throwing away his swag, keeping only blankets, gun, powder and shot. At last, in the Red Pyke valley, he saw the smoke of his mates' fire.

The bad weather persisted; so did the men "just alive and very weak". As they traversed the upper gorges of the Red Pyke they shot two magpies and ate them raw. That night they camped under an overhanging rock, near snow level. The events of 17 May were of a day of toil, "a mile long of pure ice, as clear as crystal . . . like looking down into the blue ocean", and a search for new snow covering the ice to enable foothold to be gained. It is likely but not certain that this was the Trinity Glacier, the northernmost sector of the Olivine Ice Plateau. Thence the men had to climb a mountain covered with frost and snow, from whose top the panorama showed "nothing but mountains of snow as far as we could see, in every direction but west". It is likely but not certain that this was Demon Gap between the Furies and Mount Gyrae. It is also possible that they made a pass not over Demon Gap but over the summit of Mount Ellespie.

Whatever the route, and the question has intrigued the mountaineers who have attempted to follow in Barrington's trails, it seems sure that the prospectors of 1864 gained the head of the Barrier River. Barrington's account is, "We got down by powerful exertion. At one time Simonin was behind me; I heard him sing out 'Look Out'; I turned around and he was coming down the snow at a fearful rate, head first, on his back. . . . I thought he was killed, but he was all right, with the exception of being a little frightened. We got down to the head of the flat and camped. Such a day I hope never to see again."

They left the flats at the head of the Barrier and camped under a rock in the gorge in a foot of snow. Further work in the gorge on 19 May gave the men sore and frost-bitten feet. Two days later they nearly lost Farrell when his flax rope broke and dumped him in an eddy in the creek. When they regained the



Pyke River they took their bearings from a sight of Lake Wilmot, and reached the Lake Alabaster depot on 25 May, their toes covered with running sores. Four days' diet of meagre fern-root and rain ended with a fine day and a feast on a rat: "I saw a rat which the dog had killed in the night. I never picked up a nugget of gold during the last ten years with more satisfaction than I picked him up, put him in the fire, and roasted him just as he was, then cut him in three parts, which we pronounced the sweetest bit of meat we ever ate."

In June the explorers crossed to the head of the Olivine, and later, the Hidden Falls Valley, "so tired that we would give all the world to be at the other side of it" (the dividing range). They crossed the divide on 7 June. They were so hungry in the North branch of the Routeburn that the dog was saved from the pot only by Simonin shooting seven kakas. Three days later Barrington recorded, "If fasting and praying is of any value to sinners, we ought soon to become saints, for we have had enough of it lately."

By 12 June they reached Queenstown and civilisation and were taken to Frankton hospital. Friendly miners gave them £40 and a public meeting of thanks, but the new goldfields of the West Coast claimed attention, and Barrington's work did not result in any important finds.

A postscript to the long hard adventures was that a Constable Winter from Wakatipu reported that Barrington's party had the appearance of living skeletons. It has been said that Barrington later went to Jacksons Bay in a small vessel fitted for the voyage, but that his reef, which must have been in the Cascade, was not considered payable. The suggestion was also that Barrington went up the Arawhata River for 45 miles, but that there was nothing worth staying for, and he and his party returned to the Grey by December 1864.

Today the Olivine country beckons the mountaineer, who finds in his heart a deep respect for the courage of his predecessors. And there is a new concept of a wilderness area in a National Park. Many climbers and trampers would like to see the Olivines declared a wilderness area with statutory authority that would bar the formation of tracks or the building of huts. In this way young New Zealanders could for many generations seek adventures and a testing ground where the broken glaciers,

deep gorges and uncertain weather would make them self-reliant and familiar with the skills of survival that faced the gold miners of the eighteen sixties.

I do not intrude my own experiences unduly in these narratives of exploration and re-discovery. I must however record that when in 1953 I visited the Olivine Ice Plateau and Red Pyke River, crossed Simonin Pass and followed down the Cascade gorges, stumbled over flanks of the Red Hill, and skirted the big waterfall in the Cascade, I savoured to the full the rigour of the country traversed for the first time in 1864 when birds and rain were the diet and gold was the abiding lure for adventure.

*John Browning of the Wilberforce*

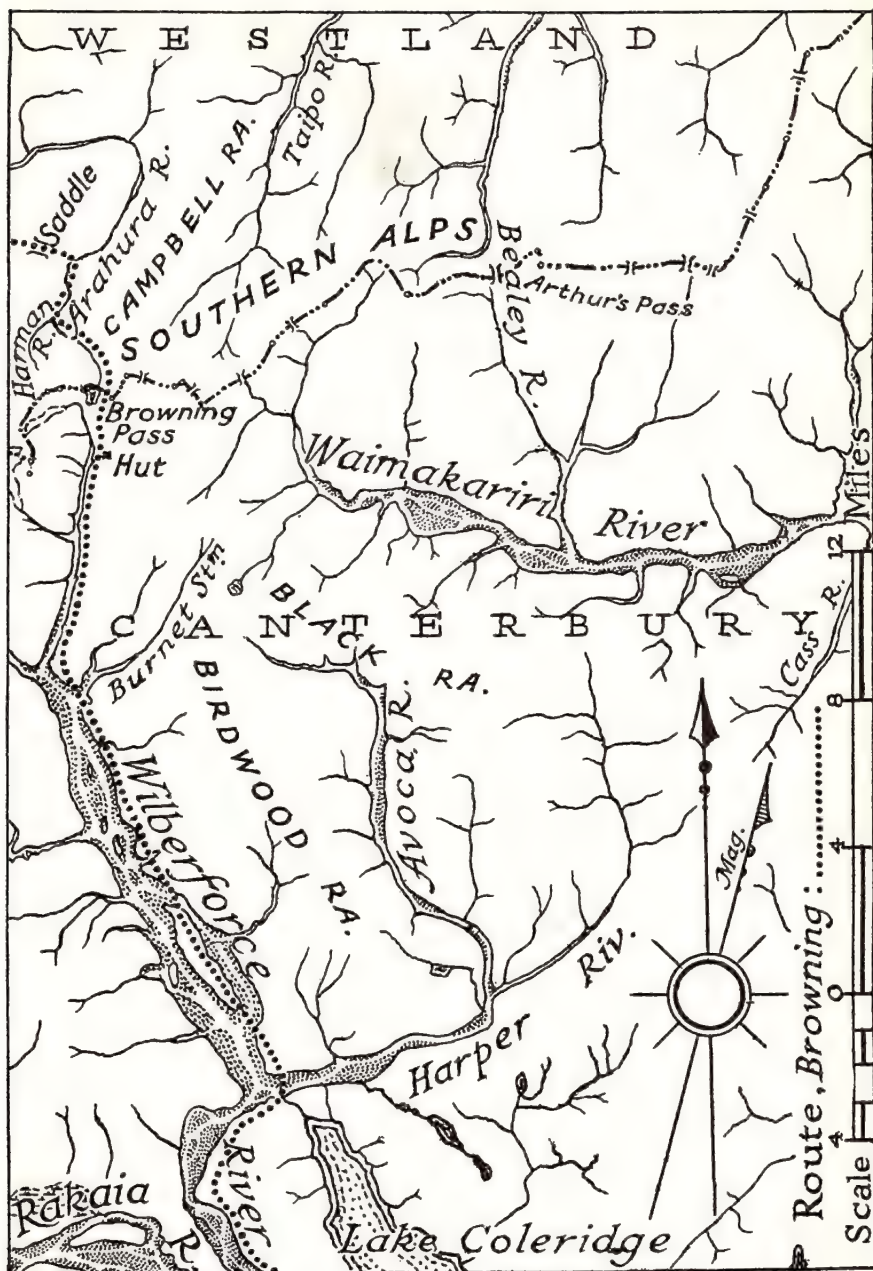
THE GOLD DISCOVERIES of the early sixties placed the West Coast on the map. The routes across the Main Divide from Canterbury were known to include Harper Pass (see Chapter 8) and Arthur's Pass, but there was some public impatience because the former was too long and the latter apparently difficult. The search for alternatives ruled out passes suspected to have alpine hazard, and Whitcombe Pass (see Chapter 10) had more than its share of gorges. The Waimakariri passes had no advocates and interest became focused on Browning Pass as a direct way from Christchurch to Hokitika.

Many people think of a Main Divide pass as being a low swampy saddle with a no-man's-land of snow tussock and tarns, a few sub-alpine shrubs and watercourses on either side, for many passes in the Southern Alps are close to such a description. Browning Pass is somewhat of an eccentric; it features a deep blue lake on a broad flat ridge, falling to the north to a throaty river, the Arahura, and to the south to escarpments of grey-wacke rock, riven by a shingle gut that spews forth on a widening scree slide to be clothed with snow-grass. At the foot of the Canterbury ramparts of the pass is the Wilberforce River, born of springs and snowfields, enlarged by the so-called Unknown branch, and joined by many tributaries until it meets the mighty Rakaia on equal terms as a sweeping boulder-rolling current.

The Arahura was the home of greenstone, prized by Maori people. If Maori legend gives credence to Raureka, chieftainess escaping from Westland with a slave across Browning Pass in 1700, and returning as guide to Ngaitahu warriors, it makes a noteworthy tale, but in the absence of corroborative details it must carry doubt. It is likely however that Browning Pass was an actual route for greenstone and raiding parties, as there is no obstacle in summer to a sure-footed Maori crossing it, and eels would be assured and bird life plentiful.

The pakeha history of the pass is not difficult to follow or to





document, for its men of action were surveyors, officials with careers as tangible as their instruments and their field-books. John Browning, after whom the pass was named, was engaged by the Canterbury Provincial Government in 1862, and was district and mining surveyor on the West Coast in 1865. R. J. S. Harman was a qualified civil engineer, a man of influence in survey work, and a walker of great endurance. With one Johnstone, Browning and Harman were pass hunting in the Waimakariri in 1865 but were recalled to investigate the Maori pass at the head of the Wilberforce following information gleaned from Ngaitahu elders at Kaiapohia (Kaiapoi).

Harman's report to the Provincial Government paid due acknowledgment to the Maori information. The party left the Glenthorne sheeprun above Lake Coleridge on 15 April and established a base near the Unknown River confluence. They set out three days later without swags to explore likely streams and were startled to see a tent pitched in the valley ahead. This proved to be the home-from-home of two fellow explorers, Griffiths and Otway who had already climbed to the pass. The parties combined and moved camps to a mile or so from the foot of the pass. The following day they took two and a half hours to climb the pass, whose access Harman described as steep and dangerous. The next few days they battled down the scrub and bush of the Arahura River, till they considered themselves blocked by a gorge, rain and the lack of provisions. They retreated back over the pass to their camp in Canterbury, where one tent of 6 feet square proved crowded for five men listening uneasily to floods pounding while the rain continued for three days.

Harman returned to Glenthorne, leaving Browning and Griffiths to continue their exploratory mapping. He gave his opinion that the public would not think much of the route even as a pack track, and that another pass would have to be used if a road was to be formed.

Browning and Griffiths took further food to their camp but two snowfalls delayed their progress till 8 May when they crossed once again to the Arahura. Profiting by their previous experiences they avoided the gorges by sticking to terraces where better going was available. When they left the Arahura by crossing the Styx Saddle they used a track blazed by gold

prospectors and reached Hokitika safely. The trip had taken nine days because six of them had been in bad weather, but Browning estimated that three or four days would be sufficient, and thought that the route would justify the formation of a bridle road.

The following month saw newspaper controversy about the rival merits of Arthur's and Browning Pass. The gleeful acerbity of public opinion found pungent humour in *Punch in Canterbury* of the period. An item headed "Recent Contributions to the Canterbury Museum" included "*West Coast Passes. A Pretty Pass. A Presto Pass. A North Pass. A South Pass. A Maori Pass. A Passable Pass, with a cul-de-sac. An Impassable Pass, with section of broken bottles. One by the Rakaia, two by the Bealey, three by the Otira, four by the Waimakariri, five by the Hurunui, cum multis aliis, too numerous to particularise—SEVERAL CONTRIBUTORS.*"

Nor were the cartoons less effective. "Where is the Pass?" on 24 June and "Persuasion Better Than Force" on 1 July (see illustration) show that the public view was that the Provincial officials were blind to the prospects of Browning Pass and mulishly plumped for Arthur's Pass. "A Road Song" also pointed to the general impatience with Superintendent John Hall:

"Make the road, Johnny, my dear Johnny!  
Make the road, Johnny, my little man!  
Anywhere, anyhow, over the mountains,  
Do it as quickly, my boy, as you can."

Today mountaineers count the crossing of Browning Pass in winter as an undertaking to be made with good equipment and some knowledge of icecraft. They would blink if it was suggested that they should carry out survey work and track formation at that season. The southern or Canterbury slope of the pass is usually frozen and a slip is a long slip. Yet Browning was so devoted to the problem of surveying a track for the miners that he went back to the pass in June.

Robert Park formerly of Wellington, a surveyor and future runholder was one of Browning's party. Another was Charles L. Money, a hard case and roaming migrant. Money's view was that the expedition was to force a passage through the snow and he noted that the departure of the party on 9 June caused a



sensation in Christchurch. The large dray crammed with tools, canvas, flour and provisions must have been a sight, but it also gave shelter to three of the men who slept under it each night. Boulders in the Upper Wilberforce blocked the dray and eventually pack-horses had to take the loads.

The first setback was what Money described as an "event of a melancholy nature", when the sight of two paradise ducks tempted one of the men to rush from his tent with a shotgun. He tripped, the gun discharged and severely wounded another survey hand in the leg, shattering the bone above the right knee. The injured man was carried back to Glenthorne in a hammock improvised by an ex-sailor. Later the patient was taken back to a hospital but he died, leaving a widow and children.

Sleet and snow made work difficult from the base camp estimated by Browning as 1,500 feet below the pass. Here the party built a slab hut. The men suffered tortures from the cold, as they scratched for timber in the bush. At other times they began to form a track at a gradient of one in three and a half. The snow was frozen very hard. Money described the staircase cut in ice towards the pass, but just as soon as the men cut steps another storm would blow up and down and fill them with snow. These snowstorms, with thunder and lightning, came to try tempers and to make necessary a plentiful supply of firewood.

One day there was another dramatic incident. A file of fourteen men were slowly climbing the slope to the pass. Browning relied on his miner's pick, while the others chewed at the slope with heavy spades. Browning wrote in his field-book that snow on the ledges of rock appeared rather insecure and that he slipped, and then returned to zigzag up the gully. Money had more vivid memories, and wrote: "At the request of Mr. Parks, our jolly old commander, I had just finished yelling with tremendous vehemence a verse of 'The Englishman', which reverberated grandly among the snowy peaks; Mr. Browning was in the act of scaling a steep and almost perpendicular ridge a few feet ahead of me; when, hearing a loud shout from the rear, 'Hold on, Browning; for God's sake, hold on'; I looked up just in time to avoid being swept away by Mr. Browning, who shot past me with terrible velocity, and travelled to the bottom of the pass in a few seconds." Money gave the results of this slip as a few severe scratches and the total destruction of

Browning's clothes. If the truth lies between the laconic entries of Browning and the rip-roaring enthusiasm of Money it is still lively enough.

After three weeks of varied activity Browning set out for the West Coast. His men took from their hut oatmeal, flour, sugar, chocolate and such provisions rolled up in blankets. Late on the morning of 21 August they topped the pass, and threw an emptied grog bottle high over a cliff. Six men headed for Hokitika and Park led the others back to the Wilberforce. Cutting steps down frozen slopes at the head of the Arahura was a trying business. Even Browning seems to have been startled.

Park must have had a tricky descent to the Wilberforce, but no doubt reached the relative comfort of the slab hut, while Browning and party camped amid the chill boulders of the Arahura, where an avalanche of snow had fallen from the slopes of Mount Axius and nearly filled part of the valley. Browning then spent two days at his survey stations linking Browning Pass with the feature now known as the Styx Saddle. The next day it rained so hard that all hands had to secure the tent. Two wekas caught by the expedition dog added to the larder. Another day passed, accompanied by avalanches from the snowy ranges. By 26 August the squalls cleared to heavy frosts and the next morning the party was up with the dawn. A day's heavy travelling in soft snow and thick scrub to avoid the gorges led to a grass river flat where the weary men camped.

By 28 August it was the all too familiar story of low provisions making it necessary to leave the valley. Further bad going in soft snow and scrub took the party over the Styx Saddle to a blazed track and so to a whata or storehouse on a pole where their cache of 100 lbs. of flour, 50 lbs. of sugar, tea, oatmeal and bacon welcomed. Browning noted that the whole party was very tired with the heavy walking, wet swags and shortage of food. Money described the great feast they enjoyed on finding the stores. Five days later the whole party reached Hokitika.

Robert Park continued his career surveying in winter, and farming at Winchmore in summer. His excellent paintings survived his death in 1870. They have recently been copied for the records of the Canterbury Museum. Browning later went to Nelson as Chief Surveyor and became Commissioner of Crown

Lands, a man of importance to the progress of a young colony but relatively unknown out of official circles. Such men took their part in the development of their country and if posterity did not honour them they are none the less to be appreciated for their vigorous enterprises. It is fitting that his name is familiar at least to trampers crossing his pass.

The controversy about the merits of Browning and Arthur's Pass died down. Droving parties used Browning's route to take sheep from Canterbury to Hokitika, an undertaking of more magnitude than could be realised till it was experienced. It was one thing to climb the pass, even with a pack, and another to cajole wiry sheep into mountaineering. Scanty accounts of these ventures underline the difficulties inherent in the crossing.

The names of the first men to get sheep across Browning Pass were A. H. Cunningham, C. A. Cunningham and John O'Halloran, all well known in Canterbury pastoral history. The Cunninghams were father and son, who had arrived in the province in 1859. Andrew Cunningham, the older, had left schoolteaching behind him in England, and went to the Ashley Gorge back-country, as partner of T. S. Mannering to relish a life with sheep, beech forest, and snow tussocks. O'Halloran was a station hand and, in his own right, known as a hard case or "character".

The establishment of the goldfields in Westland brought astounding prices for meat, and there was a chance of good profit for a stockowner who could cross the Main Divide to Hokitika. The following account is taken from a reminiscence of the son, Charles Cunningham, and, when checked with contemporary records such as narratives by von Haast and with a concise history by L. G. D. Acland of *The Early Canterbury Runs* amounts to a vivid and convincing tale.

By October 1865 the Cunninghams were aware that a stock track was being made over Browning Pass. Their problem was to take some 500 fat sheep from their station at Fernside, near the present town of Rangiora, down the north road, such as it was, to the outskirts of Christchurch (Belfast), and thence across the Canterbury Plains to the Rakaia Gorge at the appropriately named "Windwhistle". The track up the north bank of the Rakaia led to Lake Coleridge country, up the Wilberforce valley and so to Glenthorne station. The night that the drovers



reached the Glenthorne homestead, Bishop Harper was holding a service there.

They took the sheep across the Wilberforce River, a formidable task. On the west bank of that river they left the sheep with O'Halloran on grass valley flats of the Mount Algidus run. The two Cunninghams rode up the Wilberforce to the foot of Browning Pass, where the survey party was camped. Meantime Haast, the geologist, and his party had crossed Browning Pass from Hokitika. Haast gave a lively description of cutting steps with spades in a snow slope and then sliding down 1,000 feet. He told how they were hospitably received by the surveyors in a well-built hut, and later met flocks of sheep being driven up for the crossing to Westland, but that they had to wait for another season.

Cunningham's account refers to Haast's party being roped together and carrying ice-axes. Haast told the Cunninghams that the track was unsafe because of avalanches. Charles Cunningham then undertook to cross the pass out to Hokitika to prospect the route from a drover's angle, as his father did not wish to risk the sheep until there was reason to believe they could be driven without losses. Cunningham made his crossing with two survey hands in bad weather and found the country so snow-bound that they walked over Lake Browning without realising they were not on land, as it were.

Down in the Arahura at a survey camp an overseer lent Cunningham a horse; valuable assistance because the side-streams were flooded. The following night he camped at a track-maker's tent. There had been an unsuccessful gold rush to this part of the valley and the miners had threatened to lynch the man who had started the rush. The tent used by Cunningham was a cache for flour and its owner was worried that the angry miners would raid it, as their own stores were cut. However no raiders appeared. Cunningham travelled down the Styx Valley to the Kokatahi and so to Hokitika where he stayed with a friend.

Cunningham walked back to Browning Pass by the same route, and met O'Halloran, who had been sent by his father to see what had happened to him. As the track was still unfinished they decided to leave the sheep in the Wilberforce in the care of a shepherd and return to the home station to shear the

flocks that were still at Fernside. When the shearing was finished and they had returned to the Wilberforce they found that their flock of sheep had taken to a ridge above the valley. They mustered the sheep down the hill and as the flock was in good condition, they went up to the pass. To their relief the country was clear of snow and Lake Browning was free.

The first night after crossing the pass the sheep, like true Merino mountaineers left the track and hived off to Mount Harman, called "Skypokum" by the drovers. To retrieve the sheep meant crossing snowfields with mustering poles as ice-axes. The men drove the flock down through scrub country to the miners' track. As they crossed a bluff where the track-makers were blasting rock, some of the leading sheep tumbled off a face into a ravine, and there was some hard work to be done to get them back to the track and muster the stragglers safely across. The Cunninghams sold injured sheep for meat to the roadmen, and took the survivors across the Styx Saddle down to the Kokatahi and Hokitika for sale.

Cunningham senior went back to Lyttelton by boat, and his son, with O'Halloran, again made a foot crossing of Browning Pass, collected their horses near Glenthorne, and rode back to Fernside. As they crossed Browning Pass they met another mob of sheep being driven by George Harper. In my young days I worked as a law clerk for Harper, by then Sir George. He told me how at the last steep pinch to the pass, where the way lay up a narrow rocky gut, he had had to push each sheep bodily. When Harper went to England to take his law degree he told farmers of his experiences, but they did not believe him and thought his stories tall ones, even for a wild colonial boy. The Cunninghams' venture was successful, as their sheep realised £5 a head. Acland recorded that Mannering and Cunningham took other drafts of sheep across Browning Pass to Hokitika but that the fourth such expedition was snowed up for a time and the sheep were in such poor condition by the time they reached Hokitika that they lost their owners' money.

For all its promising start in 1865 as an important transalpine route, Browning Pass fell into oblivion. The miners' track up the Arahura was fair enough, and to this day its line can be followed on foot. But the track up the bluffs on the steeper Canterbury side was never completed. The mapping begun with such

enthusiasm in winter was not finished in detail till geological surveyors under James Macintosh Bell published their Bulletin of the *Hokitika Sheet* in 1906. Bell was a widely cultured man and a great traveller. His clear descriptions of the features and scenery of the region proved most attractive to generations of trampers and mountaineers who found in them an invitation to visit the crimson rata-clad hills, the boulder-strewn rapids, the deep gorges and frisking waterfalls. Bell's topographical work was done by R. P. Greville, a worthy successor to Browning, and his maps are among the finest ever made in this country before aerial mapping and plane-table surveys made contouring possible. The illustrations to the Geological Bulletin were extremely good and made the peaks and passes familiar to parties long before they saw them.

Today Browning Pass is a vital link in the Three Pass trip from the Waimakariri to Hokitika. I have made this journey three times under varying conditions; as well I have observed the country from high peaks in the watershed, and know of no more pleasant way of initiating newcomers to the mountains than to take them over the trails along which it is possible to recapture the atmosphere of a past age. A little miners' hut on Browning Pass reminds the traveller that men once sought gold there, and in the Arahura there is the draughty Pyramids Hut, also built in the last century by prospectors. Old-timers in Hokitika still tell how they took their horses from Lake Kaniere to this hut.

The explorer Charles Douglas had a rather sardonic note about Browning Pass in one of his compilations. "This is a well-known Maori route", he wrote, "and in the early days of the diggings a cattle track was made . . . although it is kept in some sort of repair in parts at least, it is now (1899) very little, if ever, used, if not abandoned." It seems likely that Douglas himself had never crossed the pass, else he would have known, as modern trampers know, that a section of the track was unfinished.

Yet the story of Browning Pass is typical of many. Discovery, enthusiasm, and neglect: the cycle runs, and the young men of the atomic age walk over the rugged ground where pioneer surveyors, miners and drovers sweated and suffered in their making of New Zealand.

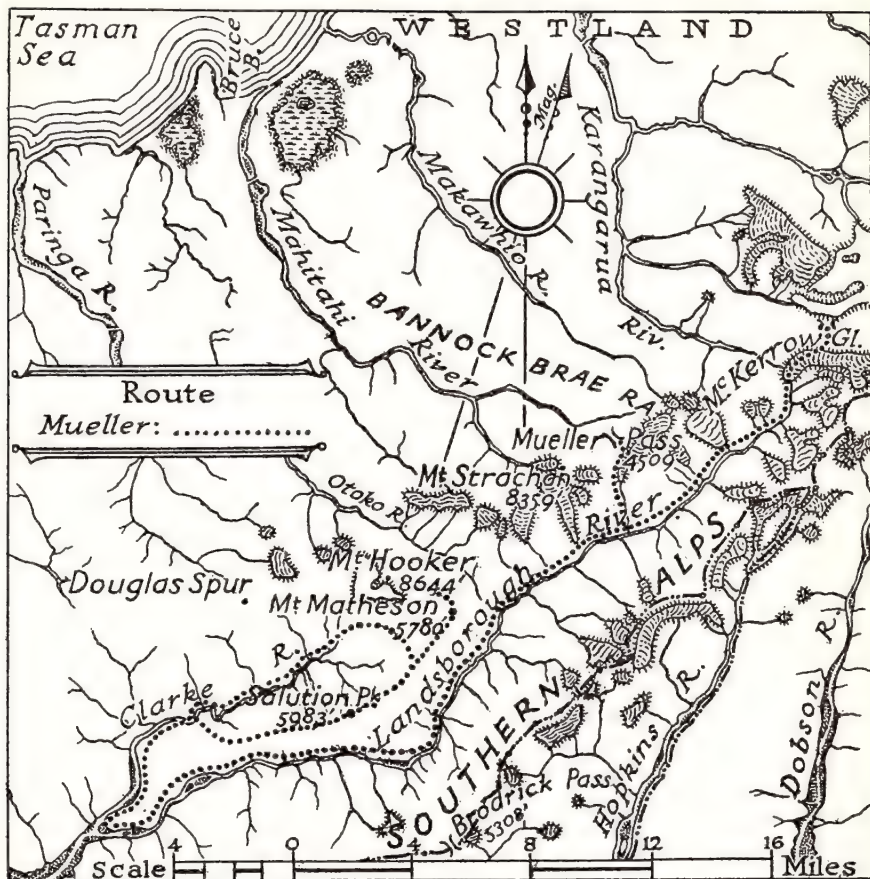


*Gerhard Mueller of the Landsborough*

IT IS ONE OF THE interesting features of the exploration of New Zealand mountain valleys that they have many pioneers. Roving gold prospectors, land-hungry cattlemen, and enterprising scientists; they all have their place in history. Perhaps it is fair to give most credit, to the surveyors and map-makers. These men went about their work with a thorough attention to detail, a professional obligation to be accurate, and an acceptance of the hazards and discomforts of their job. The prospecting itinerants of limbo left their bootmarks in the river beaches, scraped exposed roots in the beech forest, lit fires in remote places and wrinkled their eyes against strong alpine sunlight and bowed their heads to sudden storms, but only rarely did they feel obliged to record and publish their adventures. For tangible accounts, therefore, we turn to the survey reports, regretting the absence of written records of the predecessors of the surveyors.

The Landsborough Valley is one that had many explorers of a high calibre. Its mist-riven ravines were homes of equally misty legends of cattlemen from Makarora, diggers and wanderers. Even the first crossing of the Haast Pass giving access to the Landsborough from Otago was the subject of controversy that has not died nearly a hundred years later. In 1861 J. H. Baker, whose work with Samuel Butler in the Rakaia is reviewed in Chapter 10 of this book, climbed the crest of the Haast Pass, but its first crossing is likely to have been made by Charles Cameron, prospector, in 1863.\* The first complete transalpine crossing of this pass was made by an entourage led by Julius Haast the same year. He returned to Otago by the same route after an exacting journey in bad weather. Haast named the Landsborough River after a Scot who explored in Australia on a search for the missing Burke and Wills, whose names are also

\* I have referred to the Cameron-Haast fuss in *Mr. Explorer Douglas* (Wellington, 1957) page 22.



*Realise that the Landsborough Valley runs parallel with part of the Main Divide and the Hooker Range—both heavily glaciated—and you have the key to the power and the fury of the great river as an obstacle to explorers.*

commemorated in the Haast watershed. It must be noted that all these pakeha explorers were merely following a known Maori trail at 1,847 feet. The Haast Pass is the lowest major pass in the Southern Alps, and its traverse entails river risks but has no alpine dangers.

The Landsborough is a terrific valley, the longest in the Southern Alps. With the Haast added, it is close to 70 miles. It runs parallel with the Main Divide for most of its course, succoured and swollen by tributaries draining glacier basins and at its source flowing from the McKerrow Glacier. As if this was not enough, the Landsborough has the accompanying ramparts of the Hooker Range, also nursing glacier tributaries. It follows that the main river is a most formidable one; a fact that will be described vividly in the narratives that follow. Though there is no waterfall in the main river, some of its course is broken by giant boulders, and high steep bluffs are frequent obstacles against which it swirls in fury. To reward the traveller there are generous flats of long rank tussock, bending to the wind as it sweeps past the stately beech forests in the lower reaches.

Two years after the Haast Pass had been crossed, a Danish gold prospector, with a companion and a dog, made a somewhat puzzling round trip up the Clarke branch of the Landsborough to cross two mountain passes, probably from the Otoko and back to the Landsborough. But for over twenty years the Landsborough Valley was neglected, if we except the unrecorded prospectors who may have plunged through its icy waters and green bush in their search for gold.

The official exploration of the Landsborough was the climax of a career of exploration for Gerhard Mueller, whose letters of 1865-6, edited by his daughter and published in 1958 under the title *My Dear Bannie*, gave an exciting description of the routines of survey life at Bruce Bay, Okarito and Whataroa and thus a glimpse of his capacity to endure rain, rivers and tedium. Mueller's companion was Charles Douglas, whom he described as "an experienced and able bushman and cool-headed climber". The names of the other men in the party are not known.

Mueller began his report on his 1887 expedition, published in a Parliamentary Paper, "I entered upon the exploration of this, the last extensive stretch of unknown country within Westland,



in January last." It is unfortunate that although precise and factual the report is shorn of the personal sidelights by which a narrative of exploration gains a human dimension. Mueller's letters show that he had a capacity for fun, a keen observation, and a lively pen. From personal knowledge of the country he described, I try to fill in the blanks where the inhibitions of official work have neglected them.

The party left the roar of the breakers of the Tasman Sea on 24 January and made their first camp up the Clarke Valley on the south bank above Rabbit Flat. Mueller found later that there were no rabbits in the Landsborough, so he explained their presence in the Clarke by surmising that "some enterprising rabbitier has carefully brought over a pair from the Wanaka country, and set them adrift on the Clarke Flat, where they can develop unmolested by man or dog". He noted that if the rabbits were not exterminated, the fine grass on the flat would disappear.

From this camp the party climbed through the bush to open grass travelling on the Solution Range, dividing the Clarke from the Landsborough. The highest point at 5,983 feet seems to have presented no difficulties, though the swags and survey gear must have been heavy. Further along the range however, a razor-back of nearly a quarter of a mile proved to be composed of slips of fifty degrees, with loose rock, and boulders poised ready to furrow their way down the precipice leaving shattered surveyors in their wake.

Mueller was loath to leave the range, because it gave him an unrivalled view-point, both of the Main Divide and of the Hooker Range, from which he could connect his survey to peaks triangulated by G. J. Roberts some years previously. Douglas came to the rescue. He was lowered by rope from the sound ridge to the beginning of the razor-back, which he traversed. As Douglas progressed he cleared away the dangerous boulders. He found that the slope from the far end of the razor-back could be climbed safely to the grassland beyond. He then returned to his party, and men, swags, gear and dogs were let down on the rope. Some of the men crawled along the worst sections of the ridge, rather than walk erect. How they managed with loads is a mystery, unless they dragged them on the rope.

Two hours later a thunderstorm of three days' duration hit the

ridge. There was no shelter in which to camp, and shelter had to be found. To the north-west and only 2,000 feet below there beckoned the haven of Marks Flat, at the head of the Clarke River. This flat was wide, sheltered with stunted bush, and graced with many large rocks, left by a past ice age, and making ideal bivouacs where the party sat out the storm, while a memorable flood drove down to the sea.

When the weather cleared Mueller "rough-traversed" the Clarke down past Marks Flat, through a narrow gorge and to another flat considerably lower and at the confluence of three creeks. This method of survey work was to take compass bearings, and to estimate or step distances, according to the nature of the country they climbed over. Mountaineers of this generation can be grateful for the accuracy of this work which has no need of correction. Mueller filled in his map with names, such as the Kea Cliffs a remarkable rock formation carved out by glaciers.

The party must have returned to Marks Flat, because they regained the Solution Range at the point from which the storm had driven them. Thence the going was good, up and down grassy knolls, past lonely tarns, and always with views of abiding beauty. As they traversed the peak now known as Mount Matheson they would have seen at least half the length of the Landsborough River to the east, the giants of the Main Divide, and the Otoko Passes; the lower from the Clarke to the Otoko, and the upper from the Otoko to the Landsborough. To the north-west the dominating sight was Mount Hooker, 8,644 feet, named by Haast after the exploring botanist, Joseph Dalton Hooker, famous alike for having introduced rhododendrons from Sikkim to the Western world, and for having written a fine travel book that a hundred years later is required reading for all Himalayan travellers.

With the Clarke Valley mapped, Mueller could concentrate on the Landsborough. The party struck down steep bush from the head of the Solution Range and camped on wide flats where water and firewood were plentiful. At this point the travellers were in a world of their own. Down the valley, snowy peaks sparkled on the horizon. The river roar was fearsome at close quarters, but the serenity of the flats was reflected by the songs of native birds. Up the valley, the ice symmetry of Mount Dechen was foil for the rockier summits of the Divide, and the

view gave no hint of the bad travelling nearer the head of the Landsborough.

If mountain peaks were aggressively dominant on the horizon, there was no doubt who was the boss down in the valley: the river. Mueller wrote of it as "a boiling, turbulent, mountain-torrent" and believed that it was only fordable at two or three places, and then in the middle of winter.

The party found some of the tributaries on the west bank of the river, such as the Sapling, Strachan, Zora, and Fettes, so difficult that they had to be bridged, or, if that was not possible, to be followed and headed on the parent glaciers. The Zora, for example, had a boulder lying in the centre of its main torrent; this enabled a bridge of two spans to be laid. I have been helped at this place with a rope, so know what Mueller meant when he described the Zora as "tearing down through a rock-bound gorge, with perpendicular walls several hundred feet high". Appropriately I have also shivered on the Mueller Pass, 4,509 feet, linking the Maitahi with the Zora and paid silent respect to the surveyors as storm-threatening mist has arrived to blot out the view; alternatively I have strapped on crampons high on the ice of Mount Strachan, and listened to the murmur of the boss river some 6,000 feet below while the pre-dawn starkness of chill snow and indeterminate sky has frozen the environment as though it was the dawn of creation.

Above the Zora ford, the Landsborough Valley was choked by rocks and the river caused many bluffs to be climbed. Men who have followed Mueller's trails will not quarrel with his reference to "thick scrub and prickly creepers" being "down-right hard work". Beyond the Fettes tributary, the Upper Landsborough is still bouldery, but there are reasonable stretches of beach walking, and alternative grass terraces. The McKerrow Glacier was the furthest north reached by Mueller but a passage from an unpublished paper by Charles Douglas refers to a "peculiar narrow depression . . . the ridge is only a few feet above the ice on the McKerrow, but it drops into the Twain watershed in an almost precipitous slope of over a thousand feet . . .". This would have been the Douglas Pass, and it is important to note that although in 1887 the McKerrow ice was near it, today there is a climb of two or three hundred feet up rock and rubble from the McKerrow side. Such evidence



of remote glacier retreat is seen by few New Zealanders.

By 26 February the whole party had returned down the Landsborough to the West Coast. The only topographical mistakes on the map published with the report by Mueller were that a branch of the Copland was shown to rise from the Douglas Glacier, in fact the source of the Twain River, and a Main Divide pass, now known as Brodrick, was marked as leading to the Hunter River and not to the Huxley. The Hooker Range and other details stand up to careful examination. A serious appraisal of Mueller's expedition agrees with his verdict that his exploration was the most difficult he had undertaken in Westland and that the dangers had been great and many. For a man in his fifties he had accomplished mapping that could be envied by a man twenty years his junior. The only regret is that in naming the many impressive peaks on the Main Divide, Mueller chose those of New Zealand surveyors. However deserving these men might be, it is a matter for dismay to find such a procession as Mounts Trent, Fraser, Dobson, Kitson, Jackson, Baker, Clarke, Percy Smith, Humphries, Arthur, McKerrow, Hopkins, Foster, Spence, Montgomerie, Burns, and the rest. Perhaps a dash of some of the most notable of these surveyors with a backing of more imaginative names might have contented posterity.

Douglas must have benefited greatly by his renewed association with Mueller in the field, and his three sketches printed as surround for the map in the Parliamentary Paper have a period charm as well as giving the puzzle of a hut, complete with smoking chimney, on the Landsborough Flats. Mueller left Westland in 1891, and, after a good career in Auckland died in 1918, two years after his fellow explorer, Charles Douglas. Their chapter was closed but their names and associations will be remembered in the Landsborough as long as men tramp, climb, and hunt deer in its fastnesses.

It must here be emphasised that the Landsborough has attracted many fine men skilled in their special fields. Whether mountaineers or deer killers, they have been adventurous and enduring. For light relief turn to the story of the first horses to cross Brodrick Pass. The Canterbury surveyor, after whom the pass was named, made the first crossing in 1890 with a young cadet, Louis Sladden, and a dog "Carlo". On the Landsborough

side the descent is long, broken and steep. The route flanks McKenzie Creek, and for a mile or so lies over shingle in a basin. Below the bushline there is a roar of waterfall cascades and hints of spray; the spurs and faces that fall to the Landsborough are tougher than anything on the Otago side. Where McKenzie creek joins the Landsborough the height above sea-level is only a few hundred feet. The drop from the pass is therefore over 5,000 feet.

Six years after he had crossed his pass, Brodrick reported to his Department that D. Matheson, a run-holder from Lake Ohau, had cut a track through some of the bush in the Huxley Valley leading to the pass. Matheson had taken pack-horses over Brodrick Pass and down the open shingle basin of McKenzie Creek, till further progress was barred by waterfalls, bluffs, dense scrub and steep spurs. As a human pack-horse, carrying 65 lbs., I sympathised with my forbears a few years ago when undertaking the same route as part of a transalpine crossing from Lake Ohau to the Karangarua.

Matheson must have been a determined man. He panned for gold in the Landsborough Valley but secured only light washes. The weather was wet and in the course of a month's visit he and his mates travelled both up and down the Landsborough for several days. He seemed to have had good river sense, because he picked a ford that took him to the west bank, whence he climbed the Solution Range and followed the steps of Mueller and Douglas to the Lower Otoko Pass. The burden of his information to Brodrick was that there should be a tourist track from Lake Ohau to Paringa.

He suggested that the first day's ride should take tourists from Lake Ohau station to the foot of Brodrick Pass, and the second to the top of the pass. There would not have been much riding on that second day. Laden animals would have found the steep ridges exhausting. Perhaps the tourists would have been required to hang on to the horses' tails, as though they were ropes of a ski tow? Crossing into McKenzie Creek would lead to a shelter hut, which Matheson thought should be sited on the edge of the bush. Then would follow a "walk" through the bush down to the Landsborough River—a marvellous understatement for a tussle across gulches and down horrible spurs. The fourth day, after a fording of the river, would be up the

Solution Range, well clear of Mueller's razor-back, and over Mount Matheson, and so down to the Lower Otoko Pass and the head of the Otoko River. The last and fifth day would be down the Otoko Valley to Paringa. The return could be by the Haast Pass to Lake Wanaka.

All these plans presupposed good bush pack-tracks and adequate maintenance, weather that enabled a crossing of the river, and good visibility on the ranges. It is said that Matheson took many photographs on his trip. What a pity that they have not survived. Pack-horses proudly standing on the top of Brodrick Pass whisking their tails in a nor'-wester, pack-horses stabled in the sub-alpine scrub; these would be spectacular illustrations for this chapter.

In 1897 Brodrick was commissioned to cross his pass to Paringa. Although he reported that if a tourist route was opened up, the trip could be done in a few days, he took a month on his journey and was even listed as "missing". The trip took off to an ironic start, when the pack-horse failed to reach the foot of the pass, let alone the summit, to which Brodrick had to climb with loads of 70 lbs. With his mobile party of three all told, Brodrick did some surveying near the Divide, and after a few days descended to the Landsborough, where fog reigned: "this valley seems to be generally in a state of vapour". It took two trips to cross the river, as the men could not risk a ducking when carrying survey instruments.

After a traverse of the upper part of the Solution Range, over the top of Mount Matheson to the Lower Otoko Pass, and comments on the magnificent aspect of Mount Hooker, the party met rain and floods in the Otoko Valley. They had taken nearly three weeks to reach the isolated settlement at Paringa. The return to Lake Ohau was a ten days' struggle with weather and rivers; their appearance was wild, their clothes wet and their condition low.

Today aircraft can drop supplies for deer killers and climbing parties, or land men and stores in a base camp at the Clarke-Landsborough junction. This breakdown in natural defences was marked by the late Brian Wyn-Irwin with the hope that "the newer accessibility does not bring with it a despoliation and desecration". Whether or not the area becomes part of a wilderness under a National Park is not yet decided. Whatever



happens, the weather will be the most effective barrier to visitors. They can be forced in a few hours to take shelter from a storm, as though they were Mueller and Douglas, men and dogs, breathing with relief after a traverse of the razor-back on the Solution Range. In such experiences, as future visitors to the Landsborough, they will have more in common with their precursors than they realise.

*Charles Douglas of the Waiatoto*

IF THE REPUTATION OF Thomas Brunner as an explorer turns on one major journey and disregards his other expeditions, the name of Charles Edward Douglas was not well known to the present public until 1957. I edited his papers and gave his biography in *Mr. Explorer Douglas*. And the status of Douglas as explorer turns on very many journeys made between the late sixties and the turn of the century. Brunner and Douglas had this much in common: each man was the only pakeha on some of his most exacting expeditions. Brunner had as companion the resourceful Maori bushman Ekehu. Douglas had as companion the devoted dog Betsey Jane. Both companions were skilled at foraging for birds, the staple food of the Westland explorer. With this comparison made, reflect on this brief outline of the life of Douglas.

He was born in 1840 in Edinburgh, well educated, and trained as a bank clerk. A portrait painted by his eldest brother shows the young Charles as a determined lad with a sensitive mouth. He migrated to Otago in 1862, worked variously on a sheep run and on the goldfields, and went to Westland a few years later where his roaming disposition found expression as odd job man at the diggings, until inevitably he was swaggering up the remote rivers and gorges to parent glaciers beyond the rain forest. Encouraged by the surveyors Gerhard Mueller and G. J. Roberts, Douglas learnt the methods of the reconnaissance survey and took his place as map-maker of terrain that even today is known only to a handful of New Zealanders. An interlude as cattle farmer at Paringa merely emphasised his inability to remain in one valley for an indefinite time. Douglas was restless, and his search for new country compelled him to wander, whatever the discomforts and dangers to be encountered from snowfall, flooded rivers, steep bluffs and shortage of provisions.

Increasing experience as solitary explorer and as survey

hand with official parties gave Douglas confidence in his ability to survive. His work in the wild valleys of the Arawhata, Cascade and Landsborough taught him that there was no fastness that he could not enter. One of the most difficult valleys that he fully explored was the Waiatoto. He probed the lower reaches in 1882 but it was not till 1891 that he made a serious expedition to its head. Fortunately a full record of his experiences has made it possible to trace his steps from point to point, and to reveal, as only personal diaries can reveal, his reflections and states of mind during four months.

With the exception of an elbow relatively close to the Tasman Sea, the Waiatoto flows approximately due north and south in a long valley, in which grass flats alternate with rock-bound gorges. The head of the valley is bedevilled by scrub, bedecked by glaciers, and as dominated by the glorious peaks of Aspiring, Stargazer and Moonraker, as by the Main Divide to the Wilkin with its peaks of Ragan, Pollux, Castor and Alba. It is big country, whether considered from the point of view of a forester, a geologist, a glaciologist or a mountaineer.

The method used to reach the head of the valley could be described by an Alaskan climber as "back-packing". Douglas could never have carried all his gear and food up in one trip, however plentiful were birds. He had to make caches of provisions, return for more, relay parts of them further up, and then return for the rest, and, when those were eaten, go back again. This dot-and-carry-one manner of existence could be likened to a game of snakes and ladders, when snakes were gorges, storms and floods, and ladders were grass flats and sunshine.

Douglas began his 1891 trip at the end of January in a canoe he named with some irony *The Surveyor General*, and with 100 lbs. of provisions plus two tents and a fly, slasher, axe, pick, light rifle, and paper for drawing and writing. His only survey gear for his unmapped objectives were a compass and field-books. A day's hard paddling took him to Dochertys Creek. The canoe was a dug-out, and when it reached the rapids, Douglas had to remove its out-rigger, back-pack the loads for a quarter of a mile, and haul it past rocks. Beyond this obstacle Douglas could either push the canoe up river with a long pole, or haul it with a double line where he could walk



up river beaches as he towed. On the fourth day out he reached the limit of navigable river, pulled the canoe into the bush, and fixed up his camp. He was just below the elbow of the valley where it turns from west to south.

February began with heavy rain, and Douglas was glad that the canoe and the camp were safe. As he lay in his blankets he worked out his idea that the vagabond was an essential character to the success of a Colonial society, and that he was such a vagabond. His dog, Betsey Jane, listened to him, but he wrote in his journal and relieved his sense of failure by expressing it. Why was he in the wilds, when he could have remained in Scotland as a "perambulating Ink bottle, Ledger and blotting pad"? If thirty years of wandering had led to a few yards of calico in the rain, and if he was homeless and friendless, he could not regret having lived his hard life, for he had gathered "glimmerings of Truth as to how nature works". Another day of rain set Douglas wryly dissenting moral philosophy as applied to the mosquito and the sandfly.

The weather cleared on 5 February, so Douglas began cutting a track over a spur to take him past the gorge that had blocked canoe travel. It took two days to carry the loads over the spur and down to the main river, and at the end of it he nearly broke down. Remember that he was over fifty years old. The irony was that he saw two cattlemen take a mob up the far bank of the river, but he had to stick to the west bank where there were fewer tributaries to block him if they flooded. He had a day's spell, baked some bread, cursed the mosquitoes and bewailed the absence of wekas as he was tired of pigeon stew. Thus refreshed he moved camp and took some stores to near the Axius (Te Naihi) forks, puzzled out topography and noted geological formations, lamented the meanness of the Survey Department which had not given him an aneroid barometer with which to estimate his heights, and recorded that kakapos were plentiful. He guessed that he had only gained 200 feet in height above the sea, although the climb over the gorge spur would have been higher.

He carried the rest of the loads on 10 February, weary at going over the same ground two or three times. The fine weather made him suspect that the storms were waiting till he was at the head of the river. These suspicions were later to be confirmed

more than once. But at last he was getting above the mosquito country. After two days' swagging he had made another camp further up the valley, well above the forks, and had speculated that his being heir to the ages had merely witnessed his carrying loads as though he was a savage or a savage's wife. He decided that he should return to the coast for more provisions from Okuru. A week later he was back at his top camp, but though he was ready for the mountains, the weather turned to rain.

Kept to his tent in bad weather, Douglas continued to develop his theory that the mosquito and the sandfly were destined to scourge sloth from lazy mortals, causing vain man to preen in a coat made from bird-skin and a necktie of seaweed as a basis for modern civilised Love, with regular work and industry to follow. On 22 February Douglas took two weeks' supplies up the valley, through flax swamps and lawyer tangles. He was joined by "Poker", a stray dog from a cattle farm, and a companion for Betsey Jane. He camped on a flat where there were kakapos good enough for making soup. There were a few rabbits but blue ducks were scarce. He forded the silty river, where he thought it to be 500 feet above sea-level.

Rain made the river rise on 25 February, but there were many wekas and rabbits at his new camp on the east bank. As the rain poured down he was wrapped naked in a blanket while his clothes dried by a good fire. The following evening he saw his first glimpse of Mount Aspiring and its glaciers, filled in sketches and wrote about his limitations in art, and the greater limitations of his critics. Even the keas, he thought, had a poor opinion of his sketches. On 27 February he made a fast climb of the low peak of Mount Ragan. The rock slabs were too smooth for his boots so he used his "stocking feet" on the angle of twenty-five degrees, but thick weather hid the panorama that was rightly his. When he again put on his boots at the foot of the slabs, not much remained of his socks. He traversed a river flat for two miles for survey purposes and noted that rabbits were swarming at its head. Wind blew and new snow fell on the last day of February. He spent the time cutting firewood to keep himself warm, as he had only a calico shirt and drawers, and half a blanket in which to sleep. The flooded

river prevented him from regaining his main camp on the west bank.

The weather cleared fine on 2 March. A dawn start and a very hard day's travelling, including scrub-covered moraine, took him to the head of the river and back. He had gained one main objective, the Therma Glacier. The dogs had chased rabbits into rocky holes, and had bruised noses and eyes to show how few they had caught. Heavy rain the following day gave Douglas time for more moralising; that time he chose the weka as foil for his musings. The storm continued, and the two dogs shivered into the small tent. Douglas was as cramped as they were.

All storms must come to an end, and rivers subside, and by 7 March, Douglas was back in his camp on the west bank. He had forded the Waikatoto where it had broken into four branches, and to get across had been "touch and go". This experience gave his journal a vivid entry about fording rivers. He left his camp standing on 9 March, swaggered down the river, launched the canoe, and floated down the stream to reach the coast after dark.

Thus far he had proved that there were no substantial deposits of minerals unless they were covered by the snow and ice, he had climbed a good peak, but he had not found a good pass to Otago. He spent the rest of March recuperating, and avoiding the equinoctial gales. There was influenza among the settlers but he escaped it and on 6 April he again canoed up the Waikatoto. A low river made snags menacing. He stocked up with eels, skinned and salted them. Rain came the next day, and with it, a long amusing journal entry on the wickedness of draughtsmen and survey officials who changed his classical names of features for ill-sounding personal names of men who had never entered the country he mapped. He wrote: "Mount Percy Smith shall tumble down; Ben Jones capsize and crush Mount Brown." He suggested a tax of £10 a year on those who had a natural feature named after them.

Douglas again returned to the coast on 8 April, and found the ferryman in a state because his boat had been knocked around in the storm. Further bad weather postponed his trip back, and it was not until 7 May that he was back near the gorges. Three days of wind, storm and flood culminated in the



foundering of the canoe, and a general emergency. The river rose and put out the camp-fire, Douglas moved camp, searched in darkness and rain for a boot and many of his clothes, and Betsey Jane swam to safe land, with her pup in her mouth. Douglas did not record whether Betsey Jane had Poker to thank for her pup.

A fine day on 11 May gave Douglas the opportunity to find boot and clothes buried in flood mud, rescue the canoe, and make a new paddle to replace one lost in the flood. He had lost tea, tobacco and jam, so as winter began in earnest, Douglas went down river to replace them. By 16 May he was in camp at the Axius forks with yet more rain approaching. He wrote some satirical verse about the mundane names given by miners in gold-bearing country.

It is possible that as well as slaying gales from "Castle Douglas" his hut near the mouth of the Waiatoto, Douglas had spent some of his time drinking. This, combined with his generosity towards his fellows, left him hard up. Although not a prospector for material rewards, he was well versed in the skills of the gold prospector, and his search for knowledge included search for specimens. It did not matter to him very much if he did not make profitable finds. It mattered very much that he did search. Like mountaineering, his exploring had only the fortuitous fruits of self-knowledge, awareness of natural beauty, and the virtue of hard work for its own sake.

Now that Douglas knew the main river valley from top to toe, he determined to explore its major tributary, the Axius. He was puzzled that its flow of water was not a half of the Waiatoto, or, for that matter, not a fifth. He deduced that there was no large glacier at its head, which gave him a fair chance of finding a snow-free pass. He had headed his journal "Diary of a Trip up the Axius to the Lord Knows where, in search of a pass for a future Railway, or Bridle route through the range to enable Westcoasters to plunder Tourists." This overt cynicism did not mask the real hopes of Douglas that a good pass would be a boon for the future of the West Coast, with its wealth of minerals, timber and cattle country.

After some difficult fording and re-fording of the main Waiatoto, Douglas retrieved and moved his standing camp and

was in a position to press on up the Axius itself. Today exploring mountaineers would hesitate to make a new trans-alpine crossing in May. The limited hours of daylight, the cold nights, the new snow and the ever-present threat of further winter storms would deter a strong party, well-equipped with ropes and ice-axes. For Douglas to persist alone was proof both of his determination and of his courage; quixotic it might be, but it was his way of life, and one that he did not abandon because of inherent hazards.

He did not get a fine day till 21 May when he traversed the Axius to a flat at its forks. The going of cataracts and boulders must have been cold work. The next day he moved camp, gathered firewood and noted that the gorge ahead was a "sneezer". He was getting closer to his Axius Pass, "somebody may call it the Scroggins yet". On 24 May he forced his way through the gorge, carrying a fly, blanket, tomahawk, pick, and tea. It was not the first time he relied on a miner's pick as an ice-axe.

His state was somewhat ragged; no coat or hat, trousers with only one leg, a torn calico shirt and drawers; not for him the oilskins or nylon of the mountaineer of 1959. He had food enough but no cent in his pocket, or, literally, any pocket if he had had a cent. His pride was rather in his way as well as a tough mountain barrier. In Westland he was well known as Charley Douglas, and Coasters were used enough to see him in ragged clothes and unkempt beard. But if he crossed to Otago, he thought wryly, he might be mistaken for an escaped prisoner. He had to carry Betsey Jane and her pup on some of the crossings of the river. He camped, and encouraged a fire with rifle oil and a candle.

Douglas made his "day of Adventure" on 25 May, with little visibility and a snowstorm. He left his flying camp at dawn, with the pup rolled in a blanket in case wekas attacked it, and he chose a spur leading to a broader ridge with a depression on it. He headed towards Mount Alba, and, once on his new pass, looked beyond it to what he considered was the Wilkin Valley, but was too frozen to use his compass to take bearings. The wind blew harder and more snow fell. All climbers know that feeling. You shiver and wish the clouds would clear, think miserably of the long way back to camp,

relish the thought of a hot brew, and retreat while the going is, if not good, then tolerable.

When Douglas had descended to the creek that led back to his camp he realised how close he had been to danger from exposure. His belt held snow inside his calico shirt, which his body had not been warm enough to melt. His only trouser pocket also held unmelted snow. In his journal he gave us reason for his escape "the idea of perishing never entered my head. Nothing is as bad as Terror for lowering a Man's stamina." He was right, and it was a tribute to his spirit that he was not afraid, although travelling alone. A member of a party can turn for comfort to his companions if he is worried by exposure to heights and depths, storms, or difficulties. Back in camp, he made the fly snug for the night.

The day after his trip of discovery it cleared, but the new snowfall was evident. He saw no point in remaining in his camp, as he had decided not to cross his pass to Otago. He swagged back down the Axius to its junction at the Waiatoto and mislaid spectacles gave him musings on the artificial needs of mortal man. He enjoyed his first long sleep for three days. The next day he found his spectacles and was relieved that he did not have to trapse back to his flying camp to look for them. It rained and he filled in sketches. On 29 May he took a load down the Waiatoto and returned to hunt for wekas. He carried the rest of the gear the following day down to a lower camp, and packed a double load after another day of rain. Of his provisions only rice and tea remained. He must have returned to the Coast early in June but his diary is silent about the exact date.

It was significant that he finished his Waiatoto entries with the statement that he had finished his last exploring trip in the Southern Alps of New Zealand. In fact he made many others. It is disappointing that although Douglas thought he had discovered a good railway route from the Axius to the Wilkin, it was never used. That he had discovered a feasible Main Divide pass was even disputed by young mountaineers some sixty years later, and the matter cannot be decided until some bold men actually try a crossing. It is possible that the pass is a blind lead to another branch of the Axius, and not on the Divide. If on the Divide, it is possible that the bluffs on the



Wilkin side of the pass are impossible to negotiate with heavy swags. Whatever the verdict, the journey established for all time the enterprise and fortitude of Douglas, and the fact that the virtue is in the struggle and not in its rewards.

There have been only three successful transalpine crossings of the Wilkin Divide to the Waiatoto; two by a tricky pass further south than the one trodden by Douglas, and one by another route to the Axius, by then renamed the Te Naihi. No high-level route has yet been made from the glaciers around Mount Aspiring to the floor of the Waiatoto Valley, a crossing which I have thought much about but have not yet had the opportunity to attempt. The broken nature of the Therman icefalls would make the venture one of considerable alpine difficulty, and variant routes may have to be located if the complexities of crevasses prove impassable. That such a trip has not yet been made is some indication of the nature of the high country in South Westland, and that most mountaineers prefer to climb from huts, and shun bush-clad gorges when there are more certain ridges and snow basins on the Otago side. Even the low peak of Mount Ragan, first climbed by Douglas, has not since been ascended, though two parties have made the high peak by a route from the Wilkin side. Aerial photographs have resolved some of the doubts about the exact topography of the Waiatoto, and a fair map was made by Tararua climbers some nine years ago. But there is still much to be done before it can be said that the heritage left by Douglas has been fulfilled by our own generations.

Douglas continued his career with notable explorations in the Copland Valley in winter, with pioneer work with Arthur P. Harper on the Franz Josef Glacier and in the Cook River, and with track-making in the Whitcombe, but his increasing ill health from rheumatism and his addiction to drink were grave handicaps. In 1897 he was honoured by the award of the Gill Memorial medal of the Royal Geographical Society. Survey friends such as Roberts were very loyal to him, and annual reports from the Department of Lands and Survey made appreciative references to his work. His last major expedition was in 1900 when he took William Gunn up the Wanganui Valley.

The last years of Douglas were sad ones. He suffered a



#### MAIN DIVIDE VIEW

Park's sketch from the summit of Browning Pass looks south down Wilberforce Valley. The spade on the left was used to cut steps in frozen snow.



#### A CARTOON OF 1865

*Punch in Canterbury* asks, "Where is the Pass?" "Wilful Johnny" (Hall) says, "Well, they talk of Browning Pass; but upon my word I can't see it." "Grandmamma" (Public opinion) replies, "No more can't I, Johnny, and I don't believe there ain't no sich thing, drat 'em!"



#### ABOVE THE LANDSBOROUGH

The Main Divide as seen from the Upper Zora Glacier. Crystal Peak is prominent as a pyramid on the left, with Mueller Pass in the centre linking the Maitahi Valley with that of the Landsborough.

#### EXPLORERS' HAVEN

Marks Flat and the Kea Cliffs at the head of the Clarke Valley were well known to Mueller and Douglas in 1887. The Solution Range is marked by slips. Brodrick Pass is the gap on the right.





stroke in 1906, made a partial recovery, but in 1909 he retired from the survey staff, and further strokes afflicted him. He did not die till 1916. What a paradox it was that this energetic man who had lived through years of continual hazards spent his final years immobilised by strokes, unable to enjoy a peaceful retirement or to communicate with his friends.

Sufficient of the papers of Douglas were kept intact by his friends to infuse facts into the legend that grew following his death. I have told in his biography the full account of their preservation. Douglas sketches were also revealing of his eye for country and technique. Personal letters gave his opinions, hopes and bewilderments. Even his field-books had scraps of original discursion as well as bearings and compass traverses. It is not inconceivable that further Douglas papers may emerge from the obscurity of Westland family records. Only the Waiatoto journal gave examples of Douglas verse, yet another notebook was said to contain some, but it cannot be traced. Perhaps there is virtue in leaving parts of his life to the imagination: the young Douglas as cadet on a sheeprun and on the golden Shotover; the older Douglas talking by a camp-fire or reading letters from his relations in Scotland.

Charming fragments of personal reminiscences were written by Miss Mildred Westland who visited the Franz Josef Glacier with her mother in 1894. At that time Mildred was in her teens. She was impressed by the kindness of Douglas who baked bread for the Westland family, and taught them how to mix treacle with pancakes. She wrote: "A treacle tin", said Mr. Douglas, 'is a blessing in camp. You cut a hole in the bottom and let the treacle trickle through that and you'll find it will last for ever.'" She noted that the Westlands had been told that Douglas was a confirmed woman hater, but that when he had got over his shyness he was interesting to listen to and told the children about the bush birds. He took Mildred for a walk and told her it was thirty years since he had been for a walk with a lady. Betsey Jane tagged along too.

When floods caused the Westlands to have their camp moved, Douglas "came over to see us once or twice, though we never felt sure whether he really came to call on us or to see *Chums* (a boys' magazine, bound annually) for he used to . . . read that invaluable periodical during most of his visit".

If the legend of Arawata Bill, the prospector William O'Leary has become for intellectuals the symbol of inarticulate wanderer, captivated by the wild gorges and foaming rivers, the story of Charles Douglas is more tangible, with documentation from his own pen, and aided by reminiscences. It is fitting that the Waiatoto is still an unknown land to the fellow countrymen of Douglas, that it is not marked for tourist projects or ski-tows, and that for many months of the year banks of driving nor'-west rain enmesh it from the curiosity of passing aircraft. Kakapos and wekas have vacated the valley, deer have begun their infiltration, and although cattlemen from the Haast penetrate the more accessible river flats, for the most part it can be said that the bush endures in the solitude with which it attracted Charles Douglas. He reached the glacier source, never again to see their confines of icefall and scrub and precipice, but he left his with his memories the respect with which he is now honoured—a native Scot who became South Westland's explorer.

*Richard Henry of Dusky Sound*

A LOVE OF UNINHABITED places is necessary for explorers. Those blessed with a capacity to study natural history in a wilderness have yet another interest to sustain them throughout the hazards and anxieties of exploration. William Colenso and Charles Douglas have already been discussed in such a context. Another man who focused his curiosity on nature in new country was Richard Henry, born in 1845.

Henry was a Marlborough run-holder with 20,000 sheep. He failed because rabbits literally ate him out, and blamed himself because he had not studied their habits and lives. In his early forties he wrote in a pamphlet that with other unfortunates he had set himself the task of sending the rabbits to live with the moas by exterminating them, but that while he was engaged on the job they ruined him and were not yet gone. He also discussed ferrets, keas, traps and showed a specialised interest in natural history.

Henry changed the sunny tussock land of Marlborough for the caprices of a run near Lake Te Anau. Exploring attracted him and by the end of the eighties he had penetrated the wild country behind the north-west arm of the middle fiord of that lake. With Robert Murrell he crossed the ranges to George Sound, where his name was recorded on Mount Henry, 4,140 feet, and on the key pass known as Henry Saddle.

This may account for Henry's subsequent career in Dusky Sound further south. He would have known of Cook's discoveries in 1770 and later in 1773 when the *Resolution* gladly accepted Dusky's shelter for a month. Cook and his officers made a magnificent map with the significant names of Resolution Island, Wet Jacket Arm, Breaksea Island, Anchor Island, and Long Island; his men brewed beer from the leaves of rimu and manuka, caught fish and overhauled the ship, and were friendly with a family of Maoris; and the hospitable air, for



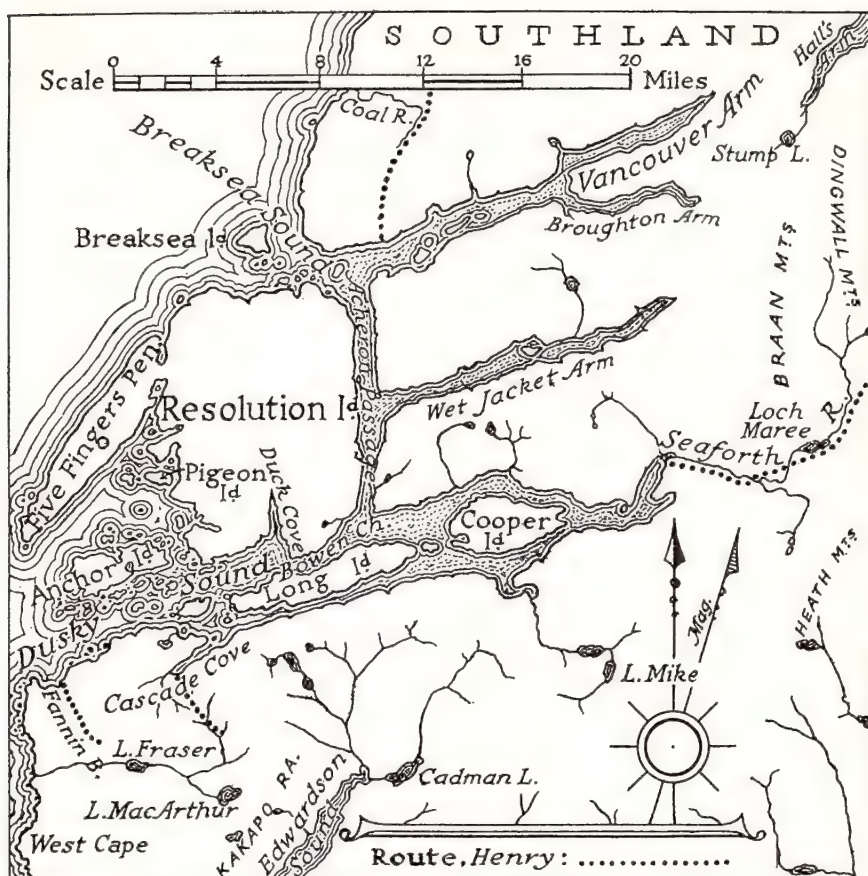
all its rain, refreshed the health of the company in their snug anchorage. One unexplored arm of the Sound labelled by Cook "Nobody Knows What" was changed by Vancouver, the next visitor eighteen years later, to "Somebody Knows What"; and then to Vancouver and Broughton Arms. Sealing gangs at Dusky also made their history. What an ideal setting it would be for a naturalist able to spend years there.

The Annual Report of the Department of Lands and Survey to Parliament in 1895 began an interesting series of accounts of and about Henry's work as "caretaker, Resolution Island". J. P. Maitland as Commissioner of Crown Lands wrote that he was the best qualified man for the work of transporting birds to the island and of exploring the mainland and adjacent islands, and that he was "absolutely reliable in every respect".

The S.S. *Hinemoa* had landed Henry at Dusky Sound on 19 July 1894. He began with a hard day's row to Pigeon Island, close to Resolution Island, and protected to the west by the Five Fingers Peninsula. He made his first sheltered camp there, and later, his house. His first month was so wet that he could do no field-work, but two weeks of fine weather heartened him, and, with an unnamed assistant, he cut a track up Mount Roa, 2,800 feet, on Resolution Island. Thick scrub clothed the summit. In spite of wild weather Henry found his new home "the healthiest place in the world, and when fine, about the pleasantest place to live in". By October he had been around Resolution Island to Breaksea Sound and had visited the smaller islands. On some of his travels he found traces of former visitors, Maoris and sealers.

Henry reported that he had finished his house in January 1895, and had made a boat-shed with carriage and tramway. He had planted potatoes, and fish were plentiful. In April that year C. W. Chamberlain wrote to the Lands Department in Dunedin that Henry's camp was "an extremely picturesque and beautiful spot". His three-roomed cottage with a brick chimney and iron roof was comfortable. He had made tracks and clearings on Pigeon Island as well as blazed tracks on Resolution Island. Bird life on the mainland included kakapos, kiwis, including roas, wekas, pigeons, kakas, ducks, tuis, smaller flying birds and penguins.

Chamberlain wrote that Henry was "a naturalist born", a



*The heavily indented coastline of Dusky Sound is characteristic of Fiordland. Only a relief or contour map could hint at the precipitous nature of the valley sides, the hanging valleys and the waterfalls. The rain forest is luxuriant and the summit ridges are broken. It was not surprising that Henry's trips by land appear so short on a map of this scale.*

good bushman and a handy carpenter. Arrangements were in hand for the transport of birds from the mainland to Resolution Island and Henry was studying fish as well as birds. His assistant was at this time a lad of near twenty named Burt.

Henry himself sent a full and interesting report. He had trained a new dog to hunt for kakapos, and had fitted him with a light cage-muzzle so that he could not harm ground birds. One expedition he made inland from the head of Dusky Sound was hampered by an attack of influenza he had caught when the steamer had called with visitors. He thought the Seaforth River would be suitable for canoe travel in its lower reaches. On 27 February he made an attempt to climb Mount Phillips on Resolution Island, but when on the grassline above the bush a fierce gale raged and he had to descend to shelter. The next day the weather cleared and he had a pleasure trip along the tops. When exploring the bush he frequently found traces of former Maori occupation.

The 1896 report stated that there had been no summer in the Sound, with 28 inches of rain in December and 31 inches in January 1896. Henry reported that the arrival of ferrets on the mainland had endangered the bird life and that efforts to transport birds to Resolution Island were necessary to preserve them from extinction. At that period he was living alone, and his superiors in Dunedin were anxious for his safety. Henry's letters gave details of such varied activity as gathering mountain tussock seeds for transplanting to determine their species, observing shoals of groper, digging for Maori relics, building a skiff to give water access for land journeys, and liberating birds on safe islands. He offered to cut a track overland to Lake Manapouri but was unsure that in the interests of the birds it would be desirable.

The same Annual Report gave details by Sir Thomas Mackenzie of his exploration between Dusky Sound and Lake Manapouri. Henry helped Mackenzie's party with dinghy transport and with track-cutting. Bad weather made all map-making difficult, and some confusions arose that later parties had to unravel.

The following year Henry gave a lively account of his year's work and the Annual Report included a map of Resolution and surrounding islands showing the distribution of many



kakapos, kiwis and roas; a total of 408. He had his first holiday after a sojourn of two and a half years in Dusky Sound. Back in his land of bush he found the winter mild: "very light frosts and bright sunny days". He thought that goats had proved to be good pioneers in breaking in bush, and that in time they should be replaced by deer. This idea, in error by the knowledge of today, was only in relation to changing felled and burnt bush to clearings of pasture, in the way that Guthrie Smith of Tutira used cattle to trample the fern.

It seems odd to read Henry's view that "some one should have a deer-farm to provide others with stock. The month of May is the time to send animals here, because there are few sandflies and milder winter than in Dunedin." Now that New Zealand has all too many parts of its back-country as virtual deer-farms, the problem is how to decrease them. But 60 years ago there were other problems for Henry. One of them was how to transport kakapos from the mainland to the islands of Dusky Sound. When in June, Henry sailed from his base to Cooper Island he heard many kakapos. It proved difficult to catch them, and he and his companion only got twelve. "It was 13 miles to Duck Cove", he wrote, "where we wanted to land them. We could not trust the wind for a return, so had to take camp and dogs; and then the twelve cages were enough to stow in our little boat. . . . Thus our 13 miles was a two days' trip, because we cannot pull a dozen miles against a light wind in an afternoon; therefore we were five days putting a dozen kakapos on Resolution, and they were five beautifully fine days, so you may imagine what it would be in a spell of rough weather."

Capturing live birds was another problem, and different to that of using a retriever to fetch dead ones. A noisy creek would prevent the naturalists from hearing their dog, or a rock crevice would shelter a bird from man and dog alike. Henry hoped that when he liberated kakapos from different habitats in the same new one that "they speak the same language, and have no tribal enmities". His report also referred to hunting for "takahi" in Fanny Bay, at the southern entrance to Dusky Sound. He also hunted for gold, but saw no takahes and washed no colours. He and his assistant climbed a rocky spur to 2,000 feet and saw the heads of Chalky and Preservation

Inlets. His note was rather sardonic, "It appeared to be a fine country for a waterproof explorer or prospector, and a likely place for surprises, but it is the windiest, wettest and coldest place we have been in. This was the second time we had been there, and we took such a dislike to it that we packed up and came away. . . ."

On 29 June, Henry located Cook's landing-place and thought of the old story of the Maori listening for his first time to the music of the bagpipes and drum.

In March 1897, Henry expected the annual visit of the *Hinemoa*, but her rough landings and supply work in the other sounds delayed her, and it was not till the end of April that she arrived. That winter Henry made another takahe hunt, that time from Cascade Cove. He went into many out-of-the-way places, but without success. With his companion he climbed five times to tops covered with snow, "in hopes of finding refugees in the bush or seeing their tracks, but there were only roas and a few kakapos". After this discouragement Henry turned to the north-east of Dusky Sound, where mountains rose beyond Breaksea Sound and where he combined exploring and takahe hunting. "We got a spell of fine weather, and cut a track two miles northward up the valley . . . then east straight up the ridge for 1,100 feet in the bush, then up an old snow-slide where it was not safe to let go a hand-hold. On the top, 2,400 feet high, there was bush again, but bedded in snow; yet it seemed to be mild, and there were plenty of birds' tracks, but no strangers." He saw a corner of Hall's Arm of Doubtful Sound that was "no use for passengers, and not high enough for mountaineers, though country suitable for them is close at hand, with snow-peaks and cliffs, barrenness and desolation, in plenty". It is interesting that Henry could thus understand the qualities in country that attract climbers.

He made another expedition for takahe, and headed up Vancouver Arm, and alone went to high places "utterly useless except for climbers". In September he tried again behind Cascade Cove to snow-level at 2,000 feet but saw no strange tracks to reward him. Thus his whole report dealt faithfully with bird catching and liberation and the fascinating routines of boating, wandering where the feet of men had never trod, and observations of nature in a truly primeval land.

As the years passed and Henry's letters were published in succeeding years in Parliamentary Papers there were many details of the numbers of birds liberated, and of exploring trips, such as in February 1898 when he climbed Mount Sparman, and hunted over steep and rough tops for takahe but without results, though there were roa and kakapo tracks. Late in 1899 he went up Mount Edgecomb with its steep slopes of basalt and slate. To mark a route back from the tops to the bush he placed *celmisia* leaves on stones; when rain and mist descended such guides were invaluable. By this time his reports were illustrated with good photographic plates such as nests of wekas and shags.

Henry had with the hermit's capacity for solitude, the hermit's incapacity to concentrate amid visitors. When in May 1900 the supply steamer called he wrote: "I could hardly collect my ideas for writing in such a bustling crowd." When living alone he was constantly on the watch for signs of bird and animal life. In June he found "opposum tracks—that is, their scratches going up the trees . . . they have a fair start in Beach Harbour". In August he saw a weasel on Resolution Island and spent all his time trying to catch it, but by October he was able to write he had seen no more of the weasel nor any effect of its presence.

The reports invariably detailed the progress of liberations and the observations of birds. The Department Report for 1903 included a long paper "Flightless Birds of New Zealand; and other Notes" by Henry. This was of great value to future generations and contained fluent and whimsical records, not dissimilar from those by Charles Douglas of South Westland. Henry wrote of the habits of woodhens, kakapos, roas, kiwis, penguins, kakas, pigeons, grebes, paradise ducks, black swans, hawks, seagulls, thrushes and others. In this paper he also wrote about the "origin and extinction of the takahe" and about moa-farmers. Henry believed that old-time Maoris had farmed moas as pakehas had farmed sheep, and adduced as evidence gizzard stones near Maori ovens. Significant references to Australia showed that he had lived there in his younger days.

Feeding kakapos was not an easy job. In June 1903 Henry explained that some birds in captivity would only eat berries. While two birds were fat and happy on oats and peas, and



another one on raw potatoes, some others could not be starved into eating oats. The photographs in the report for that year included a sheaf of fourteen, varying from birds to scenery. One shot on the beach at Pigeon Island showed a very contented looking dog lying in the sun, with three wekas wandering unconcernedly nearby. The same report gave a full digression on sharks as well as birds, and a whale also entered the pages of a Parliamentary Paper. In December he noted that it had been a good season for weather, that fish and birds were flourishing and he was in the best of health. In March 1904 he obtained an oil-engine for his cutter, and hoped this would give him less rheumatics for he would have less delay in moving from place to place.

It was significant that not only had Henry been able to take rare birds from the mainland and free them on Resolution Island but with the help of a steamer captain kakapos were liberated successfully on Little Barrier Island far to the North. By 1904 Henry had had ten successive years in Dusky Sound and in October that year departmental control of his post changed from Lands and Survey to Tourist and Health Resorts. The following month there was a *non sequitur* in the weather; 22½ inches of rain fell.

The Annual Report by his new department in 1906 gave Henry only a paragraph, but the following year he was back to his routine of fully describing activities in his kingdom of the birds. In 1908 he continued the good work. As usual, his writings were well worth study, and the incidental wisdom always to the point: "In the quiet evenings and mornings I can learn most about the birds that are present, for if I go puffing into a place in the middle of the day, I may not see or hear a bird, and then I go away with the wrong impression." He wrote sadly of the decline of the kakapo population. His own days also on Resolution Island were numbered.

The 1909 Report stated that early that year Henry had received a Lands Department appointment as custodian of Kapiti Island. His successor was a Lieutenant Goldfinch who took over in October. The following April the Government decided to withdraw the new keeper of Dusky Sound, and he left on 5 May.

Thus the work of one man had accomplished a great deal of

Careful study and observation, of feats of liberation and patience, and valuable additions to the written records. He had left his mark in the primeval land, and if his exploratory journeys are merely sketched in this chapter it is only because his own narrative always placed the emphasis on the birds that he loved so well. Men following him appreciated his qualities, and the fine pamphlet *The Kakapo* by Dr. G. R. Williams of the New Zealand Wildlife Service (1956) gave due credit, occasional incredulity and sincere reverence to Henry's achievements.

Henry retired from Kapiti in 1911. He must have found the equable climate and the relatively small confines of Kapiti Island somewhat different from his vast domains at Dusky. He died at Auckland in 1929. It is not known whether any substantial amount of personal papers have survived. From the clear and discursive accounts by Henry published in official papers, one surmises that his diaries and letters, if they exist, would be a rich treasure for students of natural history and exploration. He had all the time in the world in a land where the weather and the conditions of travel gave time as a reward and not as a scourge. It is ironic that only thirty years after Henry's death does it become apparent that he should have been encouraged to write a full length book and to preserve his papers.

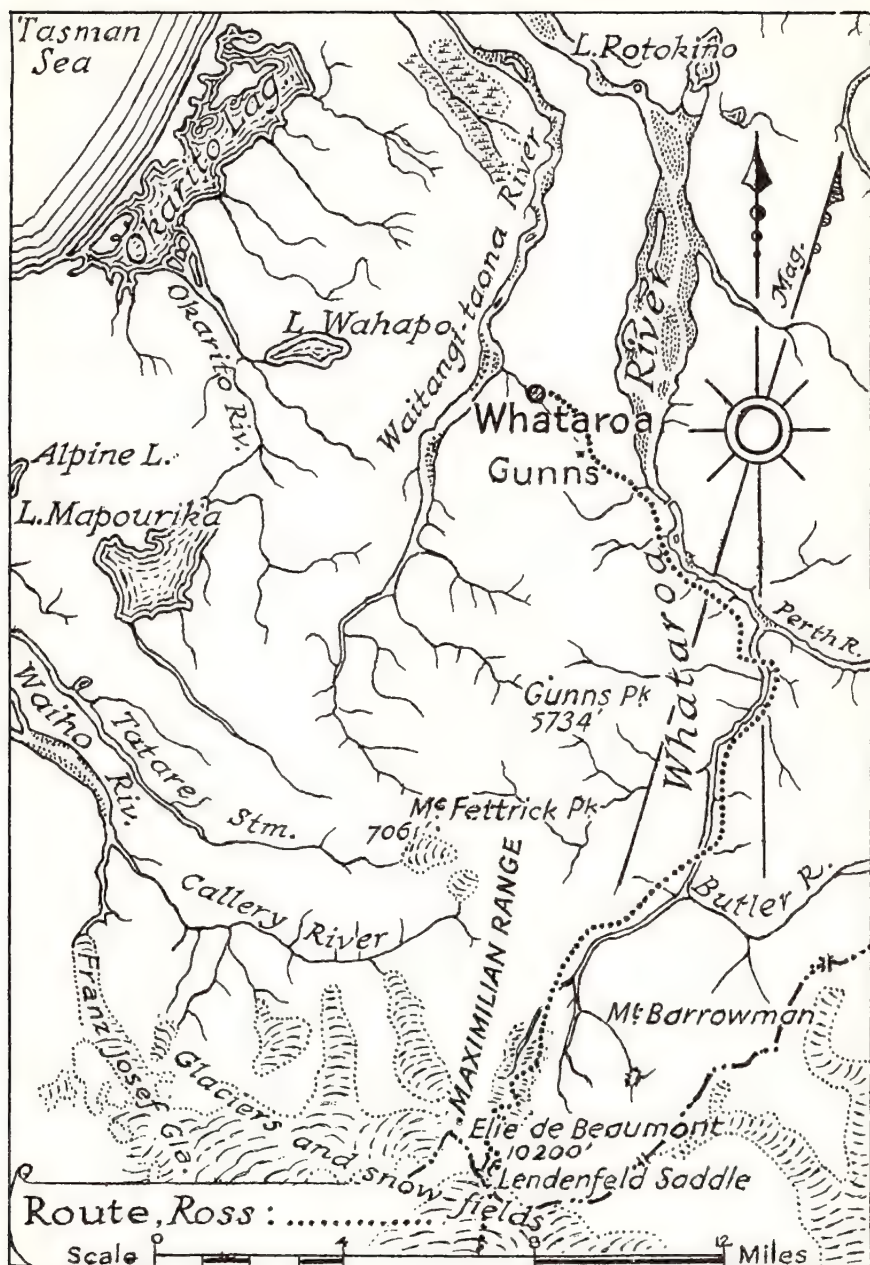
*Malcolm Ross of the Whataroa*

THE FIRST CROSSING of high passes has for the exploring mountaineer some of the attraction that is the incidental reward of making first ascents of alpine peaks. Past generations of New Zealanders were able to indulge both manners of feat as they willed.

If you glance at a map of the central Southern Alps you will see that a kea could wing from a main divide summit to the Tasman Sea in some twenty miles, that to follow down a river trail from its glacier source in Westland might be half again as far, or even twice the distance, and that the altitude to be lost from a summit to the sea would be some 10,000 feet. Taking it for granted that some of the river would flow on a relatively moderate course, it would be equally certain that a lot of it would be choked with boulders and vociferous with cascades. Similarly the mountains would be steep and the glaciers broken by crevasses. The loose nature of New Zealand rock would be sure to add to the excitement for travellers. In short, a New Zealand transalpine crossing could be an experience giving a variety of country and unexpected hazards.

The first crossing of the Lendenfeld Saddle at the head of the Whataroa from the Tasman Glacier to Westland habitation held every promise of adventure. Mannering, active New Zealand climber, had named the saddle in 1891 after Dr. R. von Lendenfeld who made the first ascent of the Hochstetter Dome in 1883. Lendenfeld was an Austrian scientist who had explored the head of the Tasman Glacier and earned the right for his name to be perpetuated. The man who is well remembered for his account of the first crossing of the Lendenfeld Saddle was Malcolm Ross, born in Scotland in 1862, educated in Otago and a good athlete and footballer. He first attempted Mount Earnslaw, then unclimbed, when in his early twenties. He was also a pioneer in approaches to Mount Tutoko in the Milford Sound region, but most of his successful climbing was achieved in the





Hermitage District. As a journalist he sometimes overwrote his accounts but his description of the descent from the Lendenfeld Saddle and down the Whataroa was by no means exaggerated, as even his vivid pen could run out of adjectives when the country was so rugged that it had to be experienced to be believed.

Where Ross was an exponent of journalism as well as climbing his companion Tom Fyfe was purely a mountaineer. The journey now described was made when Ross was 35, and Fyfe eight years younger.

The long walk was conceived from the summit of the Hochstetter Dome, where a sheer view to the Whataroa valley\* showed a silver streak of river winding through dark forest gorges. Ross took as his motto a quotation from the Arctic explorer, Nansen, who had written that a line of retreat was a wretched invention, and that it was better to keep looking ahead. In other words, Ross saw that a crossing from the Tasman Valley to the Whataroa would be such a tough proposition that it would be a case of burn the boats and press on regardless.

Ross knew from the writings of Arthur P. Harper, exploring surveyor and mountaineer, that the head of the Whataroa was untraversed; an opinion shared by G. J. Roberts of the Westland Survey staff. With Tom Fyfe, noted guide and amazing climber who had made the first ascent of Mount Cook, and other fine peaks, Ross left the Hermitage on 18 February 1897. Both men must have been in their hey-day. They swung on their packs and walked across flats to the cage at the Hooker River. After they had pulled themselves across they took the trail up the Tasman Valley by the lateral moraine of its giant glacier in the footsteps, as it were, of the redoubtable Rev. W. S. Green who had in 1882 first attempted Mount Cook.

Ross fell to wondering about the risks involved in a high transalpine crossing, as well he might. He moralised himself out of anxiety, and so hot was the valley that sloth was the next enemy to be encountered. The two men enjoyed a long spell by the Blue Lake, and were satisfied to reach the original Ball Hut at the end of their first day. They made a leisurely getaway the following morning and swagged to the bivouac rock at the De La Beche corner, scene of Fyfe's start in 1894, when his gallant dash took him to a first ascent of Mount Malte Brun and back

\* Then spelt Wataroa.

in 12 hours. To save their provisions, the climbers scrabbled around under the rock and gathered old hunks of bread and some butter left by a previous party. They continued with the swagging and made the Malte Brun bivouac that night. There they found snow-grass bedding, left in 1894 by Dr. F. Kronecker's party who had climbed Mount Darwin for the first time. Ross and Fyfe also retrieved a climbing lantern and a rusty pen-knife. By that time they had decided their swags were too heavy for the rough work ahead, and accordingly they abandoned extra clothing and a camera. They slept early on their spartan beds, fed at midnight, and broke camp at 2 a.m. A clear dawn was followed by nor'-west cloud drift. This was an ominous sign, but as they roped up and made further height they were rewarded by warming sunlight.

Once on the Lendenfeld Saddle at 7,991 feet, they were confronted with the most uninviting prospect of a broken icefall with great chasms. There was no immediate descent that way. They climbed across a snow slope to a belt of loose rock. The magnificence of the panorama was undoubted, but the crevasse-filled slopes of snow and the rotten rock was discouraging. They had a smoke and discussed whether they had to drop 4,000 feet, or merely, 3,000 feet. Fyfe was a daring mountaineer. He saw an answer, if a dangerous one, to the problem of descent. Avalanches had made a track through one part of the icefall; their blocks had choked crevasses.

This route was feasible to determined men, but if a further avalanche swept the track, their bodies would be part of the inanimate mass to span crevasses. Ross and Fyfe took the loose rock ridge carefully till it petered out some way from the snow track, reached by crossing other avalanche chutes, up the side of which steps had to be cut. At one point a falling rock cut a strand of the short rope that linked the climbers. Then they reached another rock ridge. For a while it was reasonable, but it too gave way to a cliff, which had to be avoided by taking to a narrow rock chimney down which melting snow made a waterfall. Ice pinnacles above threatened safety. They climbed down the chimney, threaded a tenuous route through an icefall glittering with icy obstacles, and once in the main avalanche chute exulted in the difficult ice climbing, with their nerves keyed to danger, jumping crevasses, sliding on steep slopes and making



all the haste they could summon. Their rope, repaired with a knot at the cut strand, checked too rapid a progress, and they reached the debris at the foot of the chute without injury.

Safely on the main trunk of the Whymper Glacier they shook hands and agreed that come what may, they would go forward. A return to the Tasman Valley by their line of descent from the Lendenfeld Saddle was not to be contemplated, whatever the circumstances that might dictate such a desperate course. They glanced back, and saw that the strengthening sun had provoked ice blocks and rocks to dash down their chute. They felt secure in their resolve to traverse the unknown gorges and bush country that lay in wait for them beyond the Whymper Glacier. Hochstetter Dome, the peak from which Ross had first seen the Whataroa, hurled rocks at the men, but they were beyond the reach of such irascibility from an unfriendly mountain.

For all the numbers of men who have climbed peaks in the Southern Alps, there have been few who have experienced the rigours of transalpine crossings. As one of them, if a modern, as it were, I have felt the mixture of happiness at having forced a crossing of a new high level pass and the foreboding about the bad weather and the bad going that might join forces. At a glacier terminal there is a singular scene whose quality depends on whether the day is fine or stormy. In calm conditions the head of a Westland valley can be a paradise on earth, with graceful flowers in the nearby scrub, silky water gliding along a level and gentle course, giant cliffs above, and, further down, long spurs massing their bluffs as though to muster a battalion for battle. In stormy conditions how desolate have become the gentle shingle reaches of the riverbed; how bleak the scrub lashed by pitiless rain; how greedy the river waves jostling each other to scour the boulders.

The route that Ross and Fyfe took to the terminal of the glacier was blocked at one place by crevasses. They retraced steps, gained rocks, appreciated a sight of golden buttercups to the west, and regained open ice for a lunch at 11 a.m. Here they dried wet puttees and socks, and thus restored by a good rest, made effective time over the large moraine boulders, up an old lateral moraine covered with scrub and alpine flowers, with a descent that led to the birth of the Whataroa River from its parent



#### WILD WESTLAND

The terminal moraine of the Therma Glacier lies above the Waiatoto River which falls to scrub and bush-flanked gorges. Douglas was the first man to see this scene in 1891.





#### IN DUSKY SOUND

The boat anchorage for Pigeon Island, used by Henry in the nineties. The bush reaches down to the high tide mark.



#### THE HEAD OF THE WHATAROA

The Lendenfeld Saddle (centre), Mount Elie de Beaumont (right) and the Upper Whataroa Valley (below) were familiar to Ross and Fyfe in 1897. This shot from a light aircraft in the thirties was one of the first taken of this inaccessible corner of South Westland.



ice cave. A snack of dry bread and a drink of Bovril, and it was swagging down the true left or western bank of the river. Scrub, huge boulders, bush and a roaring river were features of the afternoon travel. At 6 p.m., after sixteen hours of adventure and achievement, they camped, listened to the crackle of the fire merging into river noise, and spent a cold night.

If their alpine day had been one of good fortune, the ones that followed down in the gorge land changed. Their first cup of tea was from tabloids, an invention, Ross wrote, "of the devil". It was sweetened by saccharine; an unnourishing form. Fyfe had a bad leg but limped along gamely after a start at 6 a.m. Bush covered steep country down to the edge of the river, where they had to shout to make themselves heard. They alternated with boulder scrambling and bush-whacking. The giant boulders gave them scope for rock-climbing as they struggled up and over, but when a gorge blocked them they went above it. There Fyfe struck his bad leg twice on concealed rocks, and suffered considerable pain.

Another gorge loomed up after four hours of swagging. They bypassed this by using a plateau of rock and admired scarlet rata blossom on the opposite bank. Birds were scarce, except for an occasional bush pigeon or kaka. By now they had left behind the alpine plants and were in a land of rain forest, ferns and moss, and always the boulders. A return to the riverbed below the gorge entailed more acrobatic work, unwelcome to limbs stiff from the hard day of the high pass crossing. They longed for a hot bath. When they stumbled into a hot spring they had their bath; it removed the stiffness and gave a respite from the swags. After lunch by a third gorge, they stripped to cross a large side stream, and laughed at their nakedness.

Hopes of good walking were banished by another gorge, above which they made a high traverse. Distance eased the roar of the river, but when they were confronted with a tributary waterfall they descended again to the main river and were heartened by some level going on shingle beaches. A further gorge prompted them to camp, and dry wood made a good fire. Their second day had taken twelve hours. Fyfe's leg was swollen and inflamed, and their provisions were reduced to a little stale bread. Sandflies bit them until dusk, and a couch in the shingle seemed soft after rockier beds. Fyfe tossed with pain during the

night, and what with sympathy and with worry Ross also lay awake.

The river forked on the shingle flats and in the morning the men tried the ford. The first branch gave no trouble, but in the second Fyfe was swept off his feet but with determination swam to shallow swift water, where he took a second tumble. Fyfe could not throw the alpine rope back to Ross, who however forded safely. They lit a fire to dry wet clothes and gave the sandflies a feed. Breakfast of tabloid tea and saccharine was unsatisfying. Ross slew a small wren with a catapult. On they went, with Fyfe's leg hurting continuously. On finding an old track on the east bank of the river they were startled by a few cattle dashing past them. A gold miner's bootmark in the sand was encouraging. They ate most of their bread, brewed tea, and grilled the wren. At the mouth of another gorge they re-crossed the river by an old bridge. Ross abandoned his sleeping-bag and took most of Fyfe's gear in his own swag. Another track was found and followed, and at 11 a.m. they met a boy with a horse and dog. This was a son of Alex Gunn, ferryman at Whataroa.

At 12.30 p.m. they reached the Gunn house, where they were tended with true West Coast hospitality. After a few days' rest, Fyfe's leg did not improve, and he had to go to Hokitika for medical attention. Ross had no parka or overcoat, so the Gunns fixed him up with old sacks. He set off for the Copland Valley, in the company of the mailman and a pack-horse that kicked him in the leg; another injury to be suffered. After a night in the Okarito hotel they travelled along the coastline beach to Gillespie's where they were entertained to a supper of boiled fish and potatoes by a Maori and two cattle men. They sang vigorous songs to the audience in the hut that included "a quiet old Scotsman", possibly the explorer Charles Douglas. Ross stayed there awhile to give his leg a chance to heal. When he had recovered he bought provisions and with Dick Fiddian, a young settler, rode to Scotts homestead at the Karangarua. Fiddian stuck with him to the head of the Copland Valley, but Ross crossed the Main Divide alone. On the summit he had to wait for clouds to clear, but made a quick descent to the Hooker Valley.

Brown and whiskered, with torn clothes, he walked backwards

into the Hermitage to protect a ragged behind from the stares of lady tourists. He had completed his round trip, and gained material for the best chapters in his book. He died in 1930 after a good life as a distinguished newspaperman, war correspondent, author and traveller.

Forty years passed before the head of the Whataroa and its tributaries gave full knowledge to those who wished to map and climb. Ross and Fyfe had been too busy getting out of their trap to have time for topographical details. Even the ubiquitous Charles Douglas had not penetrated the Whataroa headwaters though in 1898 he had traversed the Butler branch to its glaciers. The new generation of the depression years in the nineteen thirties included two men who were fanatically interested in the Whataroa: Douglas Apperley, a clerk from Christchurch, and Bill Barrowman, a gold prospector who lived in the Whataroa for several years.

Apperley made his first attempt to reach the Whataroa from the Murchison Glacier in Canterbury but his party was not sufficiently experienced for the work. He then tried from the Westland side but the weather and high rivers were against him. After two further trips he was more successful. His companions were Bill Barrowman and Merle Sweney, and their trip began late in December 1937. Sweney was a West Coaster, well versed in bush travel, who had made many good trips, such as the Mungo and Hokitika traverses when he was a student. He had been a valued member of my Adams exploration party 1935-36, and, as a schoolteacher he had holidays to burn.

Apperley and Sweney joined Barrowman in his base camp in the Whataroa by using his track and ladders to bypass two short gorges. They found the camp complete with electric light and radio, paddle wheel and forge, spuds and hut. For two days rain gave the newcomers a chance to sleep and yarn. Doug Apperley was by this time an expert in wheat research, and, as a dough tester, he was in some position to admire or discuss Barrowman's skill with a camp oven. When the trio swagged up the river they had welcome spells for photographs and to listen to Barrowman's tales of an exploring prospector. A typical incident told of a cage slung on fencing wire that was hurled into the river, with Barrowman stranded on one side and his prospecting mate on the other, so that a daily visit was necessary to



throw a can of tinned food across the torrent, until the rivers subsided.

Apperley and Sweney forded the main Whataroa from the east bank to the west, using Barrowman's cage, with its optimistic combination of twisted fencing wire and old hemp rope. They lunched at the hot springs, possibly those discovered in 1897 by Ross and Fyfe and further swagging led to a good camp. The following day was hard enough, but Barrowman's slasher and bushcraft made progress relatively simpler than that experienced by Ross and Fyfe; if not faster, then certainly not so exhausting. At one place swags had to be pushed ahead along a rocky ledge. Another day's boulder bashing in the scrub landed the party at the terminal face of the Whymper Glacier.

They made the first day of 1938 one of exploration by following a stream to the east of the glacier to an unnamed lake with floating islands of ice, thence climbing to a high col reported by Barrowman. This led to steep ice faces to the Classen Glacier, a feeder of the Godley Glacier in Canterbury, but it did not look an attractive route for men laden with swags. On the way back to camp they climbed a minor peak later named after Barrowman, that gave a sheer view to the South Butler Valley. An approaching storm advised a retreat down the valley. With light packs and a medley of slasher marks to guide them the trip took only one day. Sweney finished an article later in the year with an appreciative reference to the one and only crossing of the Lendenfeld Saddle by Ross and Fyfe. He noted that the retreat of the Whymper Glacier had made the Saddle impracticable from the Westland side.

The following year Apperley and Sweney returned to the Whymper Glacier, with Allan Shannon, another schoolteacher. Big loads and bad weather made for a slow trip up the valley. During a break in the storms the party reached the head of the Whymper Glacier, and Apperley recorded once again the stature of the feat accomplished by Ross and Fyfe. "How those two men", he wrote, "descended the icefall between the upper and lower part of the glacier is a mystery and it will be many years before such another adventurous trans-divide crossing is attempted in view of the ever-changing nature of the iceface." He also noted that the Whymper Saddle between the Murchison and the Whataroa might prove feasible; a prophecy that was

happily fulfilled 20 years later by Hillary, Lowe, Riddiford, Beaven and Cotter, as part of their training programme for Himalayan activity.

History is a continuing process, in mountain exploration, as in other fields. The daring of Ross and Fyfe was a stimulus for other young New Zealanders to fossick for themselves in unknown corners of their rocky, bushy, snowy land.

*Jack Holloway of the Forgotten River*

RE-EXPLORATION CAN BE as important in its own right as exploration, when the feats of the original discoverers have virtually been forgotten and need a later generation to make them credible. The terrific journeys of Alphonse Barrington beyond the perimeter of the Olivine Ice Plateau have been related in Chapter 12 of this book. More than any other man, Jack Holloway, a young New Zealand Alpine Club mountaineer of the nineteen thirties, made it possible to believe Barrington's tales of glaciers and gorges, forgotten rivers, flats, red rock mountains and near starvation. Holloway not only related the trails of the pioneers to new topographical details of maps that were being drawn for the first time after 90 years of European settlement, but he extended their work and himself led satisfying discoveries. His story is as brave a one as any in the Southern Alps, and his modestly written accounts in the *New Zealand Alpine Journal* encouraged young parties to follow his routes and themselves to savour the delights of one of the most fascinating regions.

Just as an attractive city may have several approaches from the land and sea, each with a character of its own, so the Olivine Ice Plateau has obstacles to its access of a singular enticement to the exploring mountaineer. Unless the climbing party is prepared to land by ski-plane on the Plateau by the skill of a good pilot and the grace of relenting weather, it is necessary to carry heavy loads, with substantial supplies of provisions and a variety of gear. North of the Olivines the Cascade and Arawhata Rivers are gorged, and although they make good exits or escape routes at the end of a trip, they are not commonly regarded as places from which to begin one. The Hollyford watershed, to the west, with feeders of the Pyke River makes possible access to the Olivines, as Barrington proved in 1864. To the east there are the Matukituki and Arawhata headwaters, possible routes for the energetic and resolute. Southwards lies the Dart River and its



tributaries, leading to the well-named Barrier Range, virtuously clothed with generous glaciers, and offering cunning passes for those with the guts to find them. And that was the valley whence Holloway sought the alpine region with which his name is now associated.

Jack Holloway was a student at Otago University where there was a grand tradition of mountaineering. Students had carried many burdens to help establish the Grave-Talbot Pass from the Hollyford to Milford Sound. Holloway was a lithe and wiry chap of slight build, sanguine and hardy.

He would have been encouraged by a sterling trip made early in 1934 by three Southland men, James Speden, George McBride and Alex Dickie who had made the first west to east crossing of the Olivine Ice Plateau from the Hollyford to the Arawhata, and who had used blazes of William O'Leary, famed as "Arawata Bill", when in the Barrier gorge. Arawata Bill\* was a direct descendant of the tradition of Barrington; a battler who chased gold and made no maps. The Southland expedition was noteworthy for several reasons: foggy weather made the crossing of the Ice Plateau confused; incomplete maps led to mistakes in topographical recognition; shortage of provisions weakened the party; flooded rivers added hazards, and, finally, an aircraft made rescue possible for the first time in the history of the Southern Alps.

The Southland men's experiences underlined the great need for systematic mapping and exploration, for time to wait for clear panoramas from high summits, and for a step by step knowledge of the many rivers whose sources lay in the storm-beaten snows.

Thus a year later Holloway made his début on this glorious stage. He was accompanied by Albert Jackson, a veteran of Mount Tutoko, and E. J. Lilly. From a focal point named O'Leary's Pass, after the ubiquitous Arawata Bill who had crossed it in the late nineties they climbed many good peaks on the Barrier Range and were excited by the prospect of a large valley glacier and tributary icefalls at the head of the Joe branch of the Arawhata. The cumulative views established beyond

\* Arawata Bill made his journeys before the spelling of "Arawata" was changed on the maps to "Arawhata". He remains "Arawata Bill" for all time.

doubt that the southern approach to the Olivine Ice Plateau was well guarded by the Joe ice world and that a thorough knowledge of alpine technique would be needed to penetrate its defences.

In December 1935 Holloway, Jackson and Lilly returned to the Middle Dart and so to the back of their beyond. Pack-horses were not to be had at a reasonable price so Holloway and Jackson began the task of carrying over 400 lbs. of food and gear up the valley of the Dart. By 4 January they were established on the north bank of the river at Cattle Flat, and ready to force a main divide crossing. They gave O'Leary's Pass away because its bluffs were bad on the Joe River side and because they would have had to land further down that valley than was desirable. Another attempt, that time from the south-west proved a pass to be false, but they gained a new peak and a great view of a possible route. Then they retired back to the Dart to collect Lilly.

From a high camp by a tarn under ice cliffs they crossed what they named Desperation Pass. The descent down the Dilemma Glaciers included antics such as lowering 70-lb. swags into a crevasse, and after trial and error the three mountaineers slipped over scrub and ledges thankfully to gain the Joe Glacier at sunset. Holloway and Jackson shook hands on the outcome of three and a half weeks' solid work. The following day they found a safe boulder cave by a blue lake, with scrub fuel handy. They named and explored approaches to the Derivation Icefalls and the Thunderer Glacier. Two days' rain gave a welcome rest and a visit to the terminal of the Joe Glacier. How they enjoyed the fruits of their enterprise. Above them, guarding the southern end of the Olivine Ice Plateau, were two great peaks, Destiny and Climax; between them a high pass, called Solution Col. Inevitably they climbed these peaks and the col. Their alpine day was rewarded not only with satisfying climbs but with clear panoramas from which they puzzled out the topographical complexities and filled in details for their maps.

Life at the rock cave was not too bad. There were keas to be sconed for stews and no mosquitoes or sandflies to disturb somnolence. On 20 January they made a new route to Mount Gates from the Derivation Icefalls, traversed the Divide to pick up a food dump buried in drifts of snow, and so down the

Dilemma Glaciers once again to the cave camp. This round trip had sealed their success. The following day should have been restful but Jackson determined to explore to the north where two new glaciers spilled from the mountains to the scrub. Their excursion ended with more knowledge, heavy rain and a close acquaintance with spiky sub-alpine plants, lawyers, matted scrub, and rocky ledges, but the men were too tired to appreciate many varieties of birds seldom seen: parakeets, robins, kakapos, and others.

Two further attempts were made to cross to the Olivine Ice Plateau but the weather was against them. A third attempt was well omened; a perfect day and reserves of energy accomplished climbs of the Great Ark and Little Ark, with a return to the cave camp late in the evening. The next day at noon they reduced their loads to 45 lbs. each and swagged back over Desperation Pass to the Dart tarn camp, sick with over-fatigue and sunstroke. By 27 January they had returned to Paradise in the Lower Dart near Lake Wakatipu, and had achieved one of the most exacting and successful trips ever made by New Zealand exploring mountaineers. Holloway declared that Desperation Pass had no further use for him, but nevertheless it must be respected as a route that gave him the access for which he had striven so desperately, and enabled him to give dreams the outlines of reality.

He recorded that the many first ascents on three combined expeditions had not been as significant as had the exploration of a dozen new passes and as many river headwaters. He also wrote that new climbers had been trained in the course of some of the trips, and, like a good evangelist for the unknown ways, he regarded that as a worthy achievement. If he did nothing else in the Olivines his place in the history of the region would have been satisfactory, to say the least, but in December 1936 he returned for more experiences. He had a deal of bush-whacking and scrub scratching to endure to reach the Olivines from the Hollyford and the Beansburn by those from the Hidden Falls Stream, scene of Barrington's trials. From summits he saw the great valley of the Forgotten River, an important tributary of the Olivine River. In January 1937 his party spent some stormy days in a Dart hut in the company of Arawata Bill himself, a fitting link between generations of explorers. Holloway and E. Sealy crossed from the Dart to the Barrier Range and Mount



Gates and descended steep ice slopes to the wide grass flats at the heart of Forgotten River. On 1 February they again trod the Olivine Ice Plateau and made fine first ascents of Mounts Gyrae, Pic d'Argent and Intervention.

The return route to civilisation was intersected with gorges. The long flats of the Forgotten River petered out to such a bad gorge that the first attempt to traverse it led back to the starting point after some hours of rope work. They tried the other bank and were successful but rather than tackle the Lower Olivine gorge they made a high climb over the Byrneria Range and tussled down 4,000 feet of thick bush. Holloway summed up his experiences by explaining his party had only one day's climbing on the Olivine Ice Plateau, instead of the desired month. Eight snowstorms had virtually wrecked January as a climbing month. Yet so thoroughly had he covered the approaches from the south and the west that the tally of peaks for the season was twenty, many of them first ascents. Also, he had proved new passes.

Holloway was well aware that the technical alpine difficulties of the peaks of the Olivine Ice Plateau were moderate, not severe. He realised that the inaccessibility of the region was its virtue and its fascination; that in the problems of river-crossing, bush-craft, and navigation in storms lay the rewards for the New Zealand mountaineer. He made his last and farewell expedition in December 1937, beginning his trek down the Hollyford with a swag of 95 lbs. and in hot weather. Mosquitoes troubled his nights.

At the head of Lake Alabaster he made a cache of food and clothing, but a sudden storm washed away this dump. Soberly he improvised a shelter from fern fronds for the remainder of his gear and provisions, and, taking his time, returned to Howden Hut near the Hollyford. He enjoyed his sense of solitude, and felt at one with his surroundings. After a climb on Mount Talbot he was joined in the New Year of 1938 by Sealy, companion of previous trips, and Ian Whitehead, a medical student. Floods in the Hollyford and Pyke made for slow going. Wading around Lake Alabaster gave them icy water up to their chests until they joined two surveyors and swam across the head of the lake, with diverting aquatics ports and a pack-horse that panicked.

After drying out and swagging to the Barrier Hut, the party scraped fungus from their bread, bacon and cheese. On 12 January they carried full loads through the Barrier gorge in a hard day of fourteen hours. They were sustained by the sight of rata flaring from the hillsides, with its red flowers to contrast with the sombre dark green of the forest and the chill blue of the glacier river. Tuis also cheered them on with liquid songs. Their first day's climbing took them over the Little Red Hill. And then back to the swags and up to the head of the Barrier in deer trails through bush and scrub. They camped under the cliffs of the Furies. The following day they made the first ascent of Mount Ellespie and gained a glorious panorama of the Red Pyke Valley, the tempestuous peaks of the Northern Olivine Range, and the head of the Barrier River, gateway, if a steep one, to the Olivine Ice Plateau. They decided to reach the Plateau by crossing over Pic d'Argent, where they made a food dump.

The actual crossing was a stormy one, and was only made possible by the intensive local knowledge of Holloway and his good memory for features of icefall, rocky outcrops and summits. A long misty day took them to the Joe Glacier cave by the Blue Lake. Snow blindness kept a tired party in camp for a day, but on 21 January they were sufficiently restored to traverse Mount Destiny to a first ascent of Mount Passchendaele, with another traverse to Futurity Rock, a key feature between the Plateau and the Andy Icefall. Still thriving on a marvellous day they climbed the virgin Mount Gable, crossed Solution Col in sunset and reached their cave camp by midnight. After a spell of two days of cloud and wind, the weather relented and they crossed Desperation Pass to the Dart. They finished their adventurous trip by a traverse of the Dart to the Rees and recuperated in sunshine at Lake Manapouri.

In his fourth and final article in the *New Zealand Alpine Journal* Holloway gave a survey of the remaining topographical and alpine problems in the Olivines, and wrote: "Au revoir! Olivine" with moving sincerity. He completed his studies overseas, served with the Forestry Unit in the Second World War, and has become the leading authority of the New Zealand Forest Service on beech forests in the South Island.

Holloway's successors in the Olivines have done their best to maintain the tradition he continued from Barrington. Ian

Whitehead, his new-chum of 1938, made important discoveries and new climbs in the Northern Olivine Range, and Colin Todd, sensitive and able writer of alpine articles took over with the same zest and initiative. I studied their writings carefully in 1952 when Stan Conway, Bill Hannah, Ray Chapman and I planned for a long transalpine trip from Lake Wanaka to Jacksons Bay. I appreciated to the full their untiring spade work which made it possible for us to build on their experiences.

We were favoured by good weather and superb conditions. In three weeks we had only one day's rain. The schedule was a tough one, and for the most part we could only allow ourselves the luxury of six hours' sleep each night, with the odd daytime nap thrown in when a billy was being boiled. Our trip started up the west branch of the Matukituki, crossed the Arawhata Saddle, and made a high level traverse to the Snow White Glacier, whence we climbed Mount Maoriri to see the Dart Valley and its glaciers. We descended to Williamsons Flat, Arawhata headwaters, and swagged through a gorge to another wide and grassy flat. An exhausting and dangerous ford of the ice Arawhata saw us to the Williamson Valley, which we followed to a new route to Trinity Col by an exacting icefall route from the Tornado Glacier.

From a high camp on Trinity Col we traversed Mount Temple to the highest peak of the Northern Olivine Range, named by Colin Todd Mount Holloway and attempted by him from the Limbo Glacier when bad weather defeated him. Our first ascent of Mount Holloway was made on a perfect day with interwoven ranges below, new passes calling us, the Red Mountain glowing in the sun, and Mount Aspiring standing triumphant above the Matukituki Valley where our hard trip had begun. We retraversed Mount Temple back to our high camp, and after the only fine day of rest on the holiday went over the Trinity Col to the parkland of the head of a branch of the Red Pyke. Late one afternoon I went alone to fossick a route through an untraversed gorge, found it, and returned jubilant to my friends' stew.

Our fortunes thereafter were various, with long days of swagging, struggle through thick scrub, the sight and song of rare birds, the beauty of the rata blossoms, and a crossing of Simonin Pass to the Cascade Valley with rock cairns made by Arawata



Bill to guide us past the bad places, of which there were many. It took us all we knew to get through this rough land of cirques, waterfalls, rock cliffs and stunted beech forest. Our last day was a walk of 28 miles, and there at Jacksons Bay, in twilight from the Tasman Sea, two penguins waddled up to greet us. We had trodden the trails of such redoubtable pioneers as Barrington, Charles Douglas, Arawata Bill, Holloway, Whitehead and Todd, and had completed a devious new crossing from one province to another.

By other tokens this expedition was stimulating. It gave me the need when I returned home to write the verse with which I now take leave of absence from the Olivines.

### ARAWATA BILL

William O'Leary made his trails and cooled gold fever  
in rivers and gorge.

He scratched the outcrops of basic rock intrusions,  
dug alluvial gravel, sifted it and found a pass  
over the land to the sea.

The Tasman Sea flowed full to ragged cliffs and its tradition  
gave granite hardness to resolution shrunk by hardship.  
He smelt the sea and headed far up valleys  
for solitude. Rare metal his aim on the rocks  
over the land to the sea.

Before Bill came to traverse the Dart, the Pyke, the Cascade,  
the Joe, the Barrier, the Jerry, the Woodhen, the silt of  
the Williamson, the lush flats, the barren bluffs and  
turning course of torrents, great peaks primeval raised  
up in lofty quietness  
over the land to the sea.

Before his boots had scraped the moss from the boulders,  
explorer Douglas and the prospector Barrington  
had fused their sweat in the sweetness of mist. The terror of time  
and the anger of stonefall had marked the passage of all men  
over the land to the sea.

Yet the terror of time had been chafed by the patience of reason,  
the anger of stonefall had melted before the agility  
of men who found no bush hostile. Camp oven, crowbar,  
flour, bird-flesh, sleep made travel possible  
over the land to the sea.

What did Bill think of Christ? Was he Saviour  
or used in epithet hot  
to exorcise the scrub of animate devilment?  
Bill died in Catholic sheets. Were memories strong of flight  
from storms, fights with floods and snow that fell  
over the land to the sea?

The shovels have rusted, the improvised huts have rotted,  
men go the way of all men and perish their tea leaves  
on mica schist flung. Their names a legend on hills of no legend,  
their footmarks buried by leaf mould and the mating of deer  
trails  
over the land to the sea.\*

\*Published in the *New Zealand Poetry Yearbook* 1953.

*Postscript Personal*

AS THE PILOT from his aircraft sees only ripples in the sea that in reality are huge waves sweeping before a storm, so the climber of North Island mountains gazes at bushy ranges dwarfed into benign undulations. In such a view there are no other mountains to block the panorama or to compel the mind to brood on their mysteries. But from any of the hundreds of major peaks in the South Island what an abrupt and buttressed difference confronts the eye. Wherever you look, the view is a sea of mountains sending sharp rocky teeth to gash the sky or icy tops to cornice grey cliffs below. Between the tumult and splendour of those peaks of the Southern Alps are the wide valleys, the narrow gorges, the tussocks genuflecting before the wind and the alpine flowers crinkling with smiles from beds of shingle and neighbouring green leaves.

Because my own part in the exploration of New Zealand mountains has no place whatever in the North Island, and little enough in some of the mere alpine backyards, as it were, of the South Island, I should hesitate even to claim allegiance as baggage boy to Colenso, cook for Hector or pencil-sharpener for Brunner. I add this postscript humbly, as a mark of respect to the real explorers to whose work I have referred. If my pocket-handkerchief areas in the Rakaia, the Perth, and the Adams are so thin that a veteran such as Charles Douglas would cock a whimsical eyebrow at their mention, I should offer as slight virtue my eagerness to cover the trails of some of the explorations made long before my time.

And I should also offer a dedication, fanatical at times, to knowledge of topography and the recording of routes, to an untangling of historical skeins and the photographing of puzzles solved.

If I was the hundredth person on the Whitcombe Pass, I helped establish to my fellow countrymen that Samuel Butler,



not Whitcombe, was the first. If I have qualified for the genus Douglas called "Alpine lunatic" I have written his biography and edited his papers. If I have not ruined several pairs of boots, as did Brunner, trudging along rocky West Coastlines I have considered his hardships as I flew above the beaches and cliffs where he suffered, as well as edit his journals also. In short, although my birth in 1908 was too late to allow me to take part in exploring, my pastime as holiday mountaineer has enabled me to see past events in perspective, and, in travelling over some of the country described in these pages, has given me an awareness of the difficulties of the pioneers whose writings I have summarised for a general public.

I cannot pretend that I have always had this calm appraisal that my own minor fossickings in topography have been buried by the overburden of effort of the very first men in the mountains of New Zealand. As a young man I was not alone in a romantic hunger for seeking new horizons. Had not my father, Guy Pascoe, been in the first climbing party up the Crow branch of the Waimakariri? He too had pointed to the Main Divide and told me how Samuel Butler had written a book about an undiscovered race on the other side; these Erewhonians captured my childish imagination. When in 1929 I made my first long trip to the mountains and had to choose between going up the Waimakariri for a first ascent of a reputedly difficult peak and swagging up the Mingha River for its first exploration, I thought of new passes, new lakes, and new waterfalls and chose the Mingha. As it later turned out, when my friends and I had made some research into the regional history necessary, we found that the peak, Carrington, had in fact been climbed some years before; worse still, the Mingha had been explored and mapped eighty years previously. That eighty years!

Still, the attitude of mind was there, and I became a re-explorer whom I should define as one who wishes to verify the details of original exploration, and, if possible, to add the topographical punctuation, if such has not been placed by his forbears. This was good fun. Consciously I selected tributaries whose nooks seemed obscure, however well charted were the main headwaters of the parent river. The lessons learnt by the early alpine travellers to endure bad weather patiently was

ours for the asking. How often did we fail because a nor'-west storm hid the summits or a flooded river boxed us in a wet tent. All the more we could appreciate the rigours that beset our predecessors. We had perhaps one advantage; we could climb higher for the information given from a close study of pioneer diaries and journals.

The grand old man, Sir George Harper, told me that our early trips of the nineteen thirties were more gruelling than his, because whereas the first explorers were satisfied if they crossed a new pass, we felt the compulsion to climb a peak from which to survey that pass.

Thus the brother of Leonard Harper, first man to cross the Southern Alps, and the uncle of Arthur P. Harper, veteran and one-time companion of Douglas, gave to my youthful enthusiasm a stimulus that saw practical results. Sir Arthur Dobson, known today by Arthur's Pass, was a personal friend of my group when he was in his nineties. He sang "Sweet Genevieve" to us as we returned from a Canterbury Mountaineering Club picnic in the Ashley Gorge. In a land young in tradition, we knew the identity of the men whose feats had established that tradition. We needed no urging to follow in their steps, in struggling with nature as a valuable part of our existence, and a relief from the monotony of ill-paid work in years of depression.

For we had a heritage to enjoy, and opportunities. Although the explorations had already been accomplished, some maps were inaccurate and we were resolute to improve them. Many mountains were unclimbed. In making first ascents we could traverse some glaciers as pioneers and thereby gleam, if in light reflected from the past. We took to heart another lesson: not to take credit for the work of those who had preceded us. Humility is a reasonable state of mind for all seekers of knowledge. The great mountains themselves could make puny man humble, however successful he might be in raking in an occasional summit. The great men of New Zealand history, larger than life or legend, could make holiday adventurers humble by comparison when considering the long journeys from isolated settlements of long ago.

The urge to see what lay on the other side was paramount, as an exploring urge. Fortunately for us aircraft had not dared

to fly over or photograph the fastnesses to which we went. When in the early thirties "Tiny" White made the first flight across the Whitcombe Pass I wrote to him in a naïve way asking for information. He replied that he had been too busy following his propellor and the windings of the gorges to consider looking to the east or to the west when his course lay due north. There have, then, been occasions when I have panted under the weight of a swag as the crest of a new alpine pass has come closer and closer. And the bliss to wipe sweat from blurred eyes, take off snow-glasses, put down the pack, and photograph and discuss the revelation of a panorama beyond. If we were born too late, we took what we could in the way of new country as prizes more to be relished than the high central peaks of the Mount Cook region, which many men had climbed. As a guideless generation it was our privilege to concentrate on new peaks, and if the rewards were reflected only in the eyes of their beholders, they were satisfying ones.

Even a long week-end in the rain could offer a tidbit for tidying up the maps. When the big peaks were out of condition and it was flooded in the gorges of Westland, there were minor creeks on the Canterbury side, whose basins had been seen by musterers or stalkers but whose source was wrongly mapped. Even G. J. Roberts, who in the eighties linked the triangulation of Canterbury and Westland through the Strachan Pass, failed to have the time to get accuracy for the heads of the Rakaia tributaries Duncan and Cattle Creeks. The generic term "creek" was a misnomer, except in winter. In summer Cattle River would be more the caper as it rips over boulders and sometimes defies fording.

When during a wet Easter I nipped up Duncan Creek with two friends it was to prove that its pass was not a Divide one to Westland but led instead to a confusion of bluffs at the head of Cattle Creek. This discovery did not stir the alpine world; it may have interested only a dozen people, but from this spark of detail other parties led by Max Townsend and Neville Barker determined to build a modest blaze of activity. A few years later Ted Porter worked on a Cattle Creek-Mathias Saddle during his deer-killing operations, and from his information it became a key pass in the long hop from Arthur's Pass to Mount Cook. The most accurate map of this neck of the woods



is one published by the Canterbury Mountaineering Club. The Department of Lands and Survey has not yet covered the area with one mile to the inch contour maps, but either uses the attenuated 4-mile sheets or the 1-mile sheets as made by Roberts when the only objects were to fix sheeprun boundaries or connect the triangulation of important survey stations.

Perhaps I have at last come into open country in justifying a precise apology for intruding into the company of explorers, if as a scribe and spectator. Whatever work my generation did do or fail to do, however meagre it was, its sum improved maps used by other men to travel in the mountains. Some Government Departments were keen to recognise our assistance as scouts. Take power lines, for instance.

Before the last war, there was a discovery by someone looking at maps that the shortest way from Lake Coleridge to Hokitika was over Browning Pass. Was this a good and safe route for transmission lines? When a Government engineer consulted me I referred him to reports of the sixties, to the avalanche risk, and alpine dangers generally. Similarly, the siting of cosmic ray stations, and the drives for deer destruction were matters on which my friends and I were consulted. Our data, given gratefully because so few people realised that we were less than crazy or more than foolhardy, was of some use to someone, and all the more so, when it was related to obscure reports unearthed from provincial papers, newspapers or private diaries of a bygone age.

It was also the practice of my generation to hand over to other men bright ideas for exploring odd pockets of alpine and valley country, if we could not do it ourselves. I discovered, for example, a new group between the Lyell Glacier and feeders of the Rangitata, labelled it "Battleaxe and Hatchet" and told another party all about it, as from a distant view. That this party altered the names and gave no thanks for information received did not worry me in the slightest, for I had other misty tops and glaciers to sally up. What mattered was that the party was very competent both in climbing and mapping what became the "Warrior and Amazon" group, and topographical doubts were fully resolved.

Our work in the Mount Evans region gave nothing new in the way of exploration; it merely confirmed the accuracy of the

maps made by geological surveyors some thirty years before. With Evans climbed, my parties had the experience necessary for the highest mountains in the land, but we left them to others while we nosed into the rain-swept bush of the Perth Valley. The attractions were a series of valleys, terraces and hanging glaciers, with new alpine passes to inadequately mapped glaciers and headwaters beyond the dividing Westland range known as Adams. Here was a small sector of the Southern Alps with wonderful field-work to be done for romantically-minded types looking for opportunities for homespun pioneering. Some of our friends who had climbed Rangitata tops were as generous with information as we had been in the Rakaia days, and, whacko, away we went. Not with nose down and bottoms up, because we did not spell speed as haste. There was some careful intelligence work to be done.

It seemed a good lurk to explore the Perth from the glacier source, instead of travelling inland from the West Coast. It was unlikely that alpine difficulties would stop us from crossing a Main Divide col, and, when the going became really tough down in the bluffs and big boulders, the packs would be lighter. We had the usual trouble with rivers, even on the Canterbury side, but were lucky to strike a fine day to make the Divide crossing. The trip down the Perth Glacier seemed steep enough for men with swags by the standards of 1934, but today it would scarcely draw comment.

It was a very bad weather trip. We did get half a fine day from a camp near the terminal face of the Perth Glacier; enough time to dash up to a snow plateau, "The Garden of Eden", and to find a key alpine pass to the Adams watershed. We also attempted a peak three days later, but were washed off it by nor'-west rain. It was some consolation to be the first men into the head of a major Westland river, and to wonder why Charles Douglas had left the Perth to itself. We knew the going further down the valley would be slow because Dr. Teichelmann's party 11 years previously had failed to reach the head of the river in his Westland approach, what with having to make bridges over tributaries and suffering weeks of rain.

The going was in fact bad, but due rather to the prevailing storms than to gorges, as such. Although I thought the Perth

very hard travelling at the time, subsequent trips to the Adams, Arawhata, Landsborough and Twain watersheds have made me realise what bigger difficulties are like. Still, the Perth was depressing. Camps near the river bank were so noisy that you could not hear yourself talk and the Scone Creek had to be crossed by swimming tactics of a very cold vintage. We were glad to get out to Whataroa after some fifteen days away from habitation, as several of the Perth tributaries could have held us up for some time if we had not persisted with their fording. In a period when most climbing was out of the question because of the prevailing conditions of storm and gale, it was good to have made a new transalpine crossing, to have gained a key for a puzzle far more exacting than the Perth, and to have added features to a map that had been inadequate before our visit.

Storm-swept as it was, the Adams Range needed some good climbing, some clear weather from at least one summit, and some careful mapping to determine the relation of the Adams branch of the Wanganui, to the Poerua, and to the Perth. We knew that no men had been in the head of the Adams River as a long rock-bound gorge had prevented access from the Wanganui. Further, the Adams was another valley that the ubiquitous Douglas had left undisturbed. With two fully experienced friends and a new one, I repeated the gutter-like trail up the Clyde branch of the Rangitata. At the head of the Perth Glacier we struck boldly along the Garden of Eden Snow Plateau, crossed the key col discovered the previous season, fixed our one small tent to a rocky camp site, and sat outside to gloat over the Adams Flats far below, which even from that height were far wider than we could have dared to hope.

We made a good first ascent the following day but there was no visibility from the summit, and as a result I made a topographical howler on my map by confusing the head of the Poerua with what other parties later proved was a part of the Barlow tributary of the Perth. After a very wet day in camp we made another first ascent and tidied up some messy bits of topography, and with some zest forced a route with swags down the Adams Icefall that has never since been traversed.\*

\* As I corrected these proofs I received news of the second traverse of the Adams Icefall.



And there we were, in river flats of flowers and scrub; land unmapped and unknown, with our icefall shimmering with merriment and the problem of finding a route out to Westland as background for our thoughts. Two of us made a recce one way to a grassy summit while the other two prospected in a gorge. Our way was the true way, or so we thought. We nearly came to grief, and certainly came to wetness in proving the high road, because the weather let us down into a tributary of the Wanganui River bent with gorgy elbows and riddled with cascades.

There was some swimming with packs through pools, drying out in a rock cave, precarious clinging to mossy bluffs, thirst in the scrub, and exacting perseverance in forcing a way ahead where retreat was impossible. With good panoramas safe on our rolls of films, notes for the map, diaries of subjective impressions, and a strong comradeship born of these adventures we reached Hari Hari in South Westland, well content with the most interesting alpine and bush experience we could wish for as New Zealanders.

The upshot was that we submitted a map and new names to the Honorary Geographic Board of New Zealand. Many names were approved but those rejected were "The Garden of Eden Ice Plateau", "Eve", "Cain", "Abel", "The Serpent" and "Beelzebub" Icefalls. The implication that we had been irreverent I countered by pointing out that Milton had combined Biblical and classical allusions in *Paradise Lost*. Because our map was the only one for a few years, and my report was published in the *Canterbury Mountaineer*, *Unclimbed New Zealand*, and the *Journal* of the Royal Geographical Society, and one of my friends wrote a long account of the trip for the New Zealand Alpine Club, our names caught the imagination of the men who followed us, who adopted them without question. Thus our rejected names became firmly established with local usage, as it were, and persist to this day.

Because of the bad weather and mist when we had attempted to unshred the Poerua blanket, there was some important follow-up to be done. As usual, there were younger parties to show their enthusiasm. Overall, parties came from several of the leading clubs in both islands, showing that the instinct to explore was inherent. Some of them had no better luck than

we did; others had worse weather by far; others again, had better conditions but did not use them to their full advantage. Others were completely successful. A Tararua party of 1939 led by B. D. A. Greig and including Chas. Watson-Munro, now known as one of New Zealand's leading atomic physicists proved that they could cross from the Garden of Eden to the Barlow and so to the Perth. A Hutt Valley party led by Arnold Heine pushed aside the obstacles to the Poerua, first penetrated by Dick Jackson of Greymouth in 1952. Stan Conway's parties made a marathon traverse from the Rakaia to the Barlow and out over the top of Mount Adams in a hungry condition that 80 years before would have been described as semi-starvation. By combining their information, a very good map was at last produced in club magazines, which will have to remain standard reference until the Survey Department get around to a topographical sheet based on aerial photographs and mosaics.

There has been some attempts by very few parties to inflate the status of some of the features we had noted as mere ridges to "new ranges" and new cols still exist in plenty, but we can now say the region is reasonably well known to mountaineers. Similarly, if points that we regarded as bumps in a ridge are now climbed and named as peaks, that is some evidence of the need for succeeding generations to seek out new spots for their satisfaction.

For a while my returns to the mountain way were to a renewal of friendships with the ranges of the Waimakariri and Rakaia; marriage and family seemed to limit the time available. I was fortunate to have my wife as companion in some of these climbs. We did not need to explore new country, because it was sufficient joy to be in the mountains with her, and what was known territory for me was a new realm for her. Then when growing children kept her tied, and I was able occasionally to make a trip, it was to some region to which I had not been previously, such as the Spenser Range. Even there my exploring instinct hunted out a viable pass from the Ada to the Matakitaiki, but climbing peaks took precedence. Other journeys to the Rangitata, the Arrowsmiths and the Rakaia were rather to gain long-desired summits than to force remote valleys to reveal secrets.

It was not until I was immersed in the biography of Charles Douglas that I sought again Westland rigours for their own sake. Then the need to understand his state of mind and to evaluate his months of solitude impelled me to travel to the legendary Olivine Ice Plateau, the Arawhata and Cascade Valleys, and the Landsborough and Twain. I was lucky to be included in parties with the old firm of Conway, Hannah and Chapman. As re-explorer, in that I interpreted early journeys, I found the period fruitful, and if a notable first ascent in the Northern Olivines and some ice traversed by a new route were the only original slants, they were calculated to give more reverence than ever to the lonely men who first saw the features of ridge and ice shelf that we took unto our boots. The secluded atmosphere, the contrast between stillness and storm, the variety of rain forest and icefall all gave vitality to the mountain tradition characteristic of New Zealand: swagging, rivers and bad weather.

My friends took spectacular colour slides with which I could lecture and point the excitement of covering truly historic ground. Even last year I was in a South Westland valley, the Maitahi, observing an uncrossed col to the Otoko and another one to the Jacobs (Makawhio) Valleys. The urge to explore is a continuing one, whether as habit or vice, and after nearly thirty years of mountain activity I had not lost the capacity to thrill at a hint of the unknown. A payoff of this has been that I have acted as honorary peak-recogniser for many aerial photographers. When in April 1955 Professor N. E. Odell made a flight with a RNZAF Devon aircraft from Mount Aspiring to Arthur's Pass and back his photographer took a remarkable series of oblique shots. He could recognise easily the main features. When he came to the minor parts of the Southern Alps he was stumped, until I put in a week's study of the sections I knew. With this and other help Professor Odell was able to make conclusions for purposes of glaciology and geology, and to publish a paper "Air Survey of the Southern Alps" in *The Geographical Journal* of December 1956 in which he criticised the Department of Lands and Survey for never having undertaken a comprehensive topographical survey of the Main Divide.

What is left in New Zealand for future generations? Physically



there are some corners left untouched, notably in Fiordland, where the weather does its best to resist intrusion by amphibian aircraft. There are elsewhere some high passes and cols uncrossed because of great technical difficulty. Increasingly popular mountain skills will give men the means to go over these curious places. For the scientist new fields are clear. And good maps must be made.

The back-country and high-country may always be attractive to some men. In new attitudes to the bush and the mountains above may lie the adventure that is a reward for effort. Adventures of creative energy are also in prospect; novels, plays, paintings and even symphonies? The mountain fastnesses can satisfy spiritual needs as well as give men time to think and space to contemplate the skies. I am grateful to have found fulfilment in the valleys between gorges and on the snow country swept by clouds and contentment.

## Appendix

### REFERENCE TO SOURCES

#### *A Select Bibliography*

THE abbreviations by which the relevant book, periodical, newspaper or manuscript are identified in the references are here set out in the order of their appearance. Research students should consult Dr. T. M. Hocken's *Bibliography* (1909) and A. G. Bagnall of the National Library Service, Wellington, who has continued this work. The standard reference is *The Exploration of New Zealand* (Wellington, 1940) by W. G. McClymont of Dunedin. This book will have been reprinted by the Oxford University Press by the time my work appears. Another relevant book to appear in 1959 is *Early Travellers in New Zealand* by Nancy Taylor (Oxford University Press). I also recommend the concise booklets *Exploring in New Zealand* by Nancy Taylor (Wellington, 1951; Primary School Bulletins). I record my thanks to McClymont and Mrs. Taylor for their friendship and help over a long period. We have all worked in the same field and have not hesitated to share information. Dr. G. H. Scholefield's *The Dictionary of New Zealand Biography* (2 vols., Wellington, 1940) is also a standard work for New Zealand writers.

Finally I thank the staffs of the National Archives, the Alexander Turnbull Library, and the General Assembly Library, all of Wellington, for courtesies and assistance.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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From rugged coastline to snowy mountains, and grassy plains to bushed gorges; these contrasts are keys to the great variety of country in New Zealand. No less varied are the lives of the men who explored this country. Missionaries, scientists, surveyors, sheep farmers, gold prospectors, naturalists and mountaineers did their share of the work and faced hazards, privations and fatigue as routine for their days of adventure. This book tells stories unfamiliar to most New Zealanders today.

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